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ABSTRACT

A SEMINAR TO IMPROVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS
AMONG MEMBERS OF THE WAIPAHU SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Eliezer A. Graterol

Adviser: H. Peter Swanson

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT REASERCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A SEMINAR TO IMPROVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS AMONG
MEMBERS OF THE WAIPAHU SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH

Name of researcher: Eliezer A. Graterol

Name and degree of faculty adviser: H. Peter Swanson, Ph.D.

Date completed: June 2010

Problem

The members of the Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist Church had a limited understanding about the connection that exists between good relationships and evangelism, due to lack of education or training. The church members needed to strengthen their interpersonal relationships and grow in their understanding that Christianity is not just a series of doctrines and beliefs. The purpose of this project was to develop a seminar to educate members about the importance of having good relationships with one another.

Method

Three questionnaires were developed to help the participants to reflect on their current level of relationship with one another. These questionnaires also helped to obtain pertinent information to determine the specific content to be included in the seminar. The seminar was conducted at Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was presented in a 12-session format, 1 hour per session. An estimated 35 people attended each session. Study guides were provided to supplement the presentation material. A fourth questionnaire was developed to evaluate the impact of the seminar and to obtain feedback about the presenter, the content, and the environment.

Results

A positive result obtained throughout this process was manifested in my own life and ministry. The development and presentation of this seminar helped me appreciate the importance of the pastor as a facilitator and equipper. I understood that my role as a pastor was to create an informal and comfortable environment suitable for teaching and to provide opportunity for questions and comments, instead of merely sermonizing. Furthermore, a comparison of the questionnaires given before and after the seminar showed a definite increase in the understanding of the importance of good relationships and its connection with evangelism. The feedback from the fourth questionnaire about the presenter, content, and environment of the seminar were very positive and provided affirmation about the information that was shared. The expressions of gratitude from the participants reinforced this response.

Conclusions

Church members are eager to get more information and training that will help them to grow in their spiritual journey. Therefore more time needs to be invested in interactive training than in preaching. The project was effective in achieving a significant increase of theological understanding of the importance of good relationships in the life of members of the Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

A SEMINAR TO IMPROVE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS
AMONG MEMBERS OF THE WAIPAHO SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Eliezer A. Graterol

June 2010

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Purpose

Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist Church is a multicultural church on the island of Oahu, in the state of Hawai'i. Waipahu church members intellectually accept the teachings of the Bible and by God's grace desire to demonstrate them in their lifestyles. However, there is a lack of education among members regarding interpersonal skills. As a result, relationships in the church are strained. Jesus taught a vital concept when He said "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (John 13:35 NIV). Integrating these words in everyday life will result in the gospel being presented by members who experience caring and loving relationships.

The purpose of this project is to develop a seminar to educate members on strengthening their relationships with one another by sharpening their communication and interpersonal skills and assisting them in conflict resolution.

Justification

Jesus' Second Greatest Commandment is to Love One Another

In Matt 22:37-40 Jesus states the whole duty of man in very simple words, as it is presented throughout the Old Testament. He says "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law

and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” My observation of church members is that it is easy for them to understand, assimilate, and even preach theoretical points of view and doctrines while at the same time they disregard practical principles, which are basic for those that call themselves followers of Christ.

Knight (2001) affirmed that “if people are not passing on the love of God to their neighbors, it is because they don’t have it” (p. 96), and if we do not have the love of God in our life our profession as Christians is worthless. The importance of loving others is reflected by White (1941), who says, “When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own” (pp. 67-68). To reproduce the character of Christ, one must enter a real and personal love relationship with God as well as form caring relationships with fellow neighbors. These are essential components to inherit the kingdom of heaven.

In Jesus’ second greatest commandment we find also that loving others comes easier when we understand the compassion of God, which enables us to accept, forgive, and love ourselves under the premise that we are precious and honored in His sight (Isa 43:4). Augsburg (1981a) expresses it in this way,

To perceive you as equally precious again requires that I see myself as precious, worthy, irreducibly valuable as a person; or my equal regard may be expressed in my despising you as equally worthless. . . . My preciousness is experienced truly when I stand in right relationships with others, reverencing their equal worth in equal regard (see Gen. 1:27, 28; 5:1, 2; Eph.4:23, 24). . . . Love is equal regard. This is the central truth expressed in the biblical word for love, *agape*. *Agape* is offered when the other is seen as equally worthy, or treated with respect as an equal, or heard as a person with equal rights to his or her opinions, or honored as a human with equal responsibility for his or her choices, emotions and actions. (pp. 37, 38, 40)

The Mark of the True Christian

Loving one another is the way the world will know who Jesus' disciples are. The Lord himself established this radical point when he said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35). Jesus identifies his true followers as those who love each other beyond any differences and misunderstandings. To be a Christian means to love God and fellow beings.

Schaeffer (1970) states that through the centuries Christians have displayed different symbols to identify themselves to the faith they profess. However, John 13:34-35 reveals the mark that Jesus gives to label a Christian not just in one age or in any particular place, but at all times and locations until his second coming (p. 8). A very important thing to notice in John 13:34-35 is the value it portrays—love is to be our standard. We need to love other Christians just like Jesus has loved us. Schaeffer (1970), continues,

In John 13 the point was that if an individual Christian does not show love toward other true Christians, the world has a right to judge that he is not a Christian, here Jesus is stating something else which is much more cutting, much more profound: We cannot expect the world to believe that the Father sent the Son, that Jesus' claims are true, and that Christianity is true, unless the world sees some reality of the oneness of true Christians. (p. 15)

Jesus goes even further when in John 17:21 He says, "All of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." Jesus not only states that we must love one another as He has loved us but also He adds that the standard of our unity within the church as Christians is found in the harmony between Him and the Father. The result will be so evident that "the world may believe that you have sent me." Schaeffer (1970) asserts,

“This is the whole point: The world is going to judge whether Jesus has been sent by the Father on the basis of something that is open to observation” (p. 21). And then he concludes, “Our love must have a form that the world may observe; it must be seeable” (p. 34).

The Need Within the Local Church

Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist church members need to strengthen interpersonal relationships and grow in their understanding that Christianity is not just a series of doctrines and beliefs. It also embraces love as a way of living. In order to reach lost souls in our society we must put into practice the biblical principles modeled by Jesus and the apostles. Undoubtedly, the first of these principles or steps is building relationships.

White (1941) comments in this regard that

Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’ (p. 119)

In order to put into practice this principle of building relationships and mingling with people, ministering to their needs, and winning their confidence, we must be very clear about our mission as a church and about our approach to that mission. There is no doubt that evangelism is the reason for the existence of the church and is one of the few things that we will do here, but not in heaven. Mittelberg (2001) says,

We can spend all of eternity worshipping God, learning from his Word, praying to him, and encouraging and edifying one another. But only here and now do we have the chance to reach lost people for Christ. What a privilege and what an adventure! (p. 21)

However, the local church needs to understand that evangelism rises beyond a Revelation seminar, public crusade, or small group ministries. Barna (1995) says,

The most powerful attraction to a nonbeliever is seeing the life of someone transformed by the reality of the gospel. Although a verbal explanation of that faith is helpful toward facilitating a nonbeliever's decision to follow Christ, a verbal proclamation without a lifestyle that supports that proclamation is powerless. (p. 27)

This lifestyle will be manifested among other things in how the believers relate to each other within the church. The church as a body experiences tension, misunderstandings, disagreements, and conflict. No community continues and develops without these factors. Nevertheless, it is evident that church members should manage each of these factors in a way so as not to jeopardize unity in the body of Christ and present an inconsistent lifestyle that might be detrimental for the health of the church as it endeavors to fulfill the Great Commission. Augsburg (1981a) reminds us about Jesus' words when he said,

'If you have something against your brother' (see Matt. 18:15) or 'if your brother has something against you' (see Matt. 5:23, 24) go and win right relationships with the other again. Such reconciliation must precede service, worship and personal acts of response to God; for only the forgiving spirit is open to the divine Spirit. (p. 16)

And as DeVille (1995) expresses it, "... when the gospel is preached and exemplified in love and mutual support within a congregation, a growing number of people will take advantage of the opportunity to contribute in ways that make them feel good about being Christians" (p. 41).

Description of the Dissertation Process

Communication and interactive skills, the proper way to relate to each other, and approaches to facing and resolving conflict are the specific skills to be presented.

In chapter 2, a theological foundation on human relationships based on the Bible (Old and New Testament) and the writings of Ellen G. White is explored while chapter 3 deals with a review of contemporary literature.

In chapter 4, the concept of good relationships in the cultural background of the island of Oahu, Hawai'i is addressed. In addition, some of the general features of the church are presented such as a brief history and the cultural background of the congregation and the current level of relationships of the membership. A brief analysis of the surveys is also presented.

In chapter 5, a twelve hour seminar is described that is based on the principles gleaned from the Bible, Ellen G. White writings, and current literature. This seminar will also address the information obtained from surveys on the strengths and weaknesses of the Waipahu congregation in terms of communication and interactive skills, the way they relate to others, and their approach to facing and resolving conflict within the church.

The seminar will be instrumental in shaping and intensifying the three areas of interpersonal relations stated previously. The lessons are presented in a twelve-session interactive seminar, one hour per session, supplemented with study guides for participants. Through a survey, the impact and results of the seminar on the lives of the participants will be measured.

Chapter 6 provides the conclusions and recommendation for this project.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they are mentioned throughout this dissertation.

Church: This term may be used to refer to the Christian church as a whole, or the Seventh-day Adventist church as a whole.

Church Family: This must be understood as the members of the Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist church.

Conflict: This term must be understood as a neutral expression to refer to the presence of perceptual differences between people, which may cause a negative response in the behavior of the individuals.

Conflict Management: Richards (1987) states that Conflict Management is the process which controls or regulates reactions to incompatible aims, methods, goals, and behavior (p. 12).

Evangelism: The process where the church fulfills Christ's commission of spreading the good news of the Kingdom of God. Seventh-day Adventists interpret this process in a threefold manner preaching, teaching, and healing. However, in this document this term may be used to refer to the same process of reaching others for Christ, but through a personal evidence of a new birth in Christ, which is revealed in the way we communicate, interact, and relate to others and the approach we have when we face and resolve conflict.

The term *Great Commission* is used to make reference to Jesus' last words on earth recorded in Matt 28:18-20 which encircles four basic verbs or commands—going, making disciples, baptizing, and teaching—as the reason for the existence of the church.

Hawai'i Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: As Lawrence (2005) says, "In the Adventist church, the local conference is a group of members in a region or state who make up the body of the church" (p. 19). In this study this term refers to all the Adventist churches in the territory of the archipelago of Hawai'i.

Interpersonal Relationships: The development and maintenance of social association or connections between two or more people. In this document this term refers

specifically to communication and interactive skills, the way individuals relate to others, and the approach taken by an individual to face and resolve conflict.

Lifestyle: In general, lifestyle is the way a person lives. In this document this term may be used to emphasize the importance of putting into practice all the Christian principles established in the Bible and being doers instead of just hearers of the Word.

In this document, the term *membership* is normally used in a specific way to identify those individuals who have been baptized or instructed in the fundamental teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist church and are received into the church fellowship as members.

Oahu: One of the six populated islands of the state of Hawai'i. Even though this island is not the biggest in terms of square miles, it is the most populated and developed of the Hawaiian Islands. The main city and the capital of the state, Honolulu, is located on this island.

Postmodernism: Is the worldview which goes beyond mere relativism. It has had a strong impact in our art, literature, dress, music, architecture, self-identity, and definition of right and wrong. This way of thinking tries to see human experience as incoherent and lacking absolutes, especially in the areas of meaning and truth. In addition to this, this worldview manifests its lack of interest for organized religion. The predominant idea is that there is no center, only plural possibilities of perspective.

SDA: It is the abbreviation for Seventh-day Adventists.

Skill: This term is used to narrow the art, technique, or ability to relate in positive ways with others especially within the church in the areas of communication, interaction, and conflict resolution.

Spirituality: Is the result of a deep, real, and personal relationship of love with God, which among other things results in loving relationships with one another.

Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist Church: The local church where the seminar will be developed and presented.

Limitations of the Project

The scope of this project must be limited to adequately cover the subject matter. This section will set the limitations for this project:

The first limitation addresses the area of literature. The literature review covers general principles on Interpersonal Relationships, and even though these principles will be considered, the focus and concentration of this project will be particularly on communication and interactive skills—the way individuals relate to others and their approach in facing and resolving conflict.

A second limitation focuses on the scope of evaluation. The survey population is defined as those participants who were present at the point in time when the survey was administered. Moreover, the accuracy of the responses depends on the cooperation and honesty of the participant group.

A third limitation is that even though general principles can be applied in other places this seminar was designed to meet the unique cultural characteristic of the Waipahu congregation. Therefore, the findings of the research should not be generalized to other geographical areas.

Finally, this project is concerned with the attitudes and views of the participants. The descriptions of the weaknesses and strengths in the evaluated areas, and the possible

solutions presented in the seminar, were identified and selected through the personal choice of the author.

CHAPTER 2

FOUNDATIONS OF GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

The origin of interpersonal relationships studies is credited to the social science fields of sociology and psychology. Human behavior and interpersonal relations should be studied and analyzed under the premise established by these disciplines, yet, in spite of their value, humanity is more broken today than ever. The Bible provides a trustworthy history of the origin of broken relationships, a good foundation for healing, and the path to restoration. The concept of healthy relationships is abundantly expressed in the Scriptures. This chapter gives an overview of these references in three major sections. The first covers the concept of healthy relationships in the Old Testament; the second explores counsel on relationships from the New Testament and, finally, section three presents key counsel from the writings of Ellen G. White.

The Concept of Good Relationships in the Old Testament

Good Relationships in the Pentateuch

The first two chapters of the Bible portray a perfect and happy environment. “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Gen 1:31 NIV). Perfection and happiness was fully experienced by Adam and Eve in a real, intimate, and personal relationship of love with their Creator. Lewis (2001) echoed this idea when he said, “The happiness which God designs for His higher creatures is the happiness of being freely,

voluntarily united to Him and to each other in an ecstasy of love and delight” (p. 48).

Sailhamer (1992, chap. 1) puts it another way when he stated that the Garden of Eden, like a sanctuary, was a place where humanity could enjoy the same presence of God and His fellowship. Fellowship with God made it possible for humans to have perfect harmony with self, with the natural world, and with others.

Stated differently, in Gen 1-3, we find three relationships: Human to God (spiritual relation), human to human (social relation), and human to the physical world (physical relation). These three relationships are interwoven or interrelated. Genesis 1-3 is a perfect world, a world of shalom: peace, health, wholeness, and harmony.

Holistic harmony was broken, however, when the man and woman succumbed to the tempter. The book of Genesis clearly states that their choice determined the end of absolute happiness, harmony, and perfection. Lewis (1952) stated:

What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could ‘be like gods,’ could set up on their own as if they had created themselves, be their own masters, invent some sort of happiness for themselves outside God, apart from God. And out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history, money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy. (p. 49)

Sin enters the picture and ruptures or distorts all four relations including the human to human relationship. Schaeffer (1971) stated, “The Bible says, that man fell, at a specific point of history, and as man fell, both man and the world over which he had dominion became abnormal” (p. 70). Therefore, every problem of communication, division, and conflict is a direct result of the fall. Notwithstanding, in the last two chapters of the Bible, Rev 21 and 22, we find that these three relationships are all completely restored. Between Gen 3 and Rev 21 we see a God who desires to restore these three relationships, to heal and bring back the world of shalom (Exod 15:26).

Found also in the Bible's introduction is the message that God rejects all human ambitions, which have resulted in broken relationships at all levels. At the same time it can be seen how important it is to God to restore social relationships in order that man may achieve and enjoy a community of shalom.

This idea is plainly stated even before the fall in the context of marriage, the nucleus of all social relationships. On the sixth day, God created Adam and Eve in his own image: male and female. "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in our likeness.' . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:26-27). A recent study (Aufderhar, as cited in Cortés, 2004) points out, "Man by himself does not reveal the total image of God, because, to have the complete picture of how God is, they must be together, man and woman" (p. 35). According to Aufderhar once man and woman are together they reveal God's image. Thus, it is in the context of communion expressed here in marriage where we can find the most complete picture of how God is. The image of God represents what God is, and according to John "God is love" (1 John 4:7, 8). This image has been manifested in a total, harmonious relationship of love within Father, Son, and Holy Spirit before the beginning of time. Whidden, Moon, and Reeve (2002) stated:

Could one who has existed from all eternity past and who made us in His loving image, could this God truly be called love if He existed only as a solitary being? Is not love, especially divine love, possible only if the one who made our universe was a plural being who was exercising 'love' within His divine plurality from all eternity past? . . . Is the Creator God, who is called love, in any way finally dependent upon His created beings to reveal and demonstrate His love? . . . Genuine love requires that there be someone who can be loved. . . . But these words, 'God is love,' have no real meaning unless God is at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God were a single person, then before the universe was made, he was not love. . . . Furthermore, perfect love is possible only between equals. Just as a man cannot satisfy or realize his powers of love by loving the lower animals, so God cannot satisfy or realize his love by loving man or any creature. . . . 'Only the plural

unity of the Trinity explains this. . . . There was a time when the universe was not, and if God's blessedness and perfection depended upon the universe, then there would have been a time when God was neither self-conscious (nor) blessed.' (pp. 115-116)

As God has revealed His image through a perfect, harmonious relationship of love within the Trinity before the beginning of time, it was His desire and design that humanity would enjoy a complete relationship of love with God exemplified in marriage and broadened to all social relationships. The kind of love epitomized in the Trinity should be the aim for every Christian. As Schaeffer (1970) stated:

Because every man is made in the image of God and has, therefore, aspirations for love, there is something that can be in every geographical climate in every point of time which cannot fail to arrest his attention. What is it? The love that true Christians show for each other and not just for their own party. (p. 16)

Another incident before the fall, which emphasizes how important it is to God that His creatures enjoy healthy social relationships, is reflected in the following words: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2:18). While this statement refers to marriage, it has deeper social implications. Humans are created as social beings and will find meaning, help, refreshment, and enjoyment with others. It is understood that in order to grow, succeed, and live one needs others.

Commenting on Gen 2:18, Henry (1:18-19) expanded:

How God graciously pitied his solitude: It is not good that man, this man, should be alone. Though there was an upper world of angels and a lower world of brutes, and he between them, yet there being none of the same nature and rank of beings with himself, none that he could converse familiarly with. Now he that made him knew both him and what was good for him, better than he did himself, and he said, "It is not good that he should continue thus alone." It is not for his comfort; for man is a sociable creature. It is a pleasure to him to exchange knowledge and affection with those of his own kind, to inform and to be informed, to love and to be beloved. What God here says of the first man Solomon says of all men (Eccl. 4:9), that two are better than one, and woe to him that is alone. If there were but one man in the world, what a melancholy man must he needs be! Perfect solitude would turn a paradise into a desert, and a palace into a dungeon. . . . In our best state in this world we have need of one another's help; for we are members one of another, and the eye cannot say to the

hand, I have no need of thee, 1 Cor. 12:21. We must therefore be glad to receive help from others, and give help to others, as there is occasion . . . Family-society, if it is agreeable, is a redress sufficient for the grievance of solitude. (p. 18)

God places importance on healthy relationships in Exod 20 in the Ten Commandments written with His own finger on tablets of stone. The first four commandments establish the relationship between the Creator and created beings. The remaining six establish the relationships of all humanity to each other, in order to live in peace, love, harmony, and safety. Wolf (1991) stated:

There are differences of opinion about the exact way the Ten Commandments are divided up, but all agree that the initial commands address man's relationship with God and the later commands deal with man's relationship with man. . . . When asked which of the commandments was the most important, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:5 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Matt. 22:37), which is a summary of the first four commandments. The second commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39), sums up the last six commandments. (p. 152)

In the context of the Year of Jubilee God tells Moses, "Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the LORD your God" (Lev 25:17). Caring for my neighbor, and finding ways to benefit humanity, is the result of fearing and loving God. In other words, among the evidences of my relationship with God is my attitude toward my neighbors.

While meditating on those who would seek the presence of the Lord, David (Ps 15:1-5) concluded:

LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman, who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the LORD, who keeps his oath even when it hurts, who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.

Other Old Testament Passages

David understood that to live with God in his sanctuary requires a way of life that benefits and cares for the neighbor. Intellectual knowledge of laws and doctrines is not enough. Caring for one's neighbor must be a consequence of a genuine and sincere love to God and the neighbor, considering his welfare as a priority.

The relationship between Jonathan and David exemplify the principle of a loving and caring relationship. "After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself" (1 Sam 18:1). Jonathan was the prince of Israel, the intended future king. He understood God's will that the one he loved, who his father believed was his worst enemy, was chosen to fill his position. Jonathan's love for David not only saved his friend's life but also encouraged him to succeed in the kingdom.

As God declared from the beginning, "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen 2:18), all humanity needs other people in order to grow and to live healthy lives; therefore, it is important to establish and maintain healthy relationships with one another. Solomon emphasized our need for each other in this way, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Prov 27:17).

In the Old Testament and throughout the rest of Scripture God's primary interest and care is centered on people; more than anything else, care, love, consideration, appreciation, and acceptance of one's neighbor are more valuable to God than any other religious activity. Manifesting a real interest in other people opens the door for the fulfillment of wonderful promises from God. Isaiah recorded one of these promises:

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to

share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” The mouth of the LORD has spoken. (Isa 58:6-14)

In the light of this passage God is more interested in our active involvement against the evils of oppression than in mere formalism. Oppression is the antithesis of loving relationships. Therefore, it is not enough for a follower of the True God to be content exclusively with religious actions such as fasting and prayer; God’s promises will be manifested upon those that rise above oppression and injustice. The idea stated in the previous passage about justice as a key component of love has been reinforced by God in other passages throughout the Old Testament. Some of these passages are as follows:

“He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God” (Prov 14:31).

“If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood . . . then I will let you live in this place” (Jer 7:5-7).

“He does not oppress anyone, but returns what he took in pledge for a loan. He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked” (Ezek 18:7).

“Give up your violence and oppression and do what is just and right. Stop dispossessing my people, declares the Sovereign Lord” (Ezek 45:9).

“But evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts” (Amos 5:15).

“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (Amos 5:24).

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic 6:8).

“See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright—but the righteous will live by his faith” (Hab 2:4).

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other’” (Zech 7:9-10).

“These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,’ declares the Lord” (Zech 8:16).

The Concept of Good Relationships in the New Testament

The Concept of Good Relationships in the Gospels

When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, He placed great importance on healthy relationships with God and with our neighbors. He was very clear that it is not enough to love only those who love us, but Christians are called to love, care, and forgive

our enemies (Matt 5:38-47). Bonhoeffer (1937) gave this definition of enemies, “In the New Testament our enemies are those who harbour hostility against us, not those against whom we cherish hostility, for Jesus refuses to reckon with such a possibility. The Christian must treat his enemy as a brother” (p. 164). Bonhoeffer defined an enemy as the person who manifests resentment, opposition, and even aggression toward the Christian and not the other way around. The true followers of Christ understand that they are not to cherish hostility toward anyone.

Everything Jesus said or did was to benefit people: every story, every miracle, every action, even every rebuke was to benefit someone. This principle was the core of his message, and his work to bring healing among the people. Healthy relationships matter to God. In all four gospels we find a Jesus who spent most of his time mingling and interacting with people. Not discussing doctrines and ideas, as did the religious leaders of his day. The perfect example of Jesus for his followers is the central message of the NT. God is interested in people. The gospel is about touching, reaching, and restoring people and not necessarily about systems and doctrines. However, the tendency is to have more love for an organization or a group of doctrines than for people. This is antagonistic to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is clear that the Christian calling is centered in Christ’s example, especially in leading others to Jesus Christ. Schaeffer (1971) described the call to Christ’s followers when he said:

God has always intended that Christians should be the evidence, the demonstration, of Christ’s victory on the cross. The Christian’s call is to believe right doctrine, true doctrine, the doctrine of the Scripture. But it is not just a matter of stating right doctrine, though that is so important. Neither is it merely to be that which can be explained by natural talent, or character, or energy. The Christian is not called to present merely another message in the same way as all the other messages are

presented. We must understand that it is not only important what we do, but how we do it. In the first chapter of the book of Acts, between Christ's resurrection and ascension, he gives a command not just to preach the gospel, but to wait for the Holy Spirit and then to preach the gospel. Preaching the gospel without the Holy Spirit is to miss the entire point of the command of Jesus Christ for our era. (p. 71)

During the celebration of the Passover, not long before His arrest, and just before predicting both Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial, Jesus makes the profound statement, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (John 13:34-35 NIV). There are several things to be considered in this passage.

First of all, Jesus' statement of loving one another is given to the intimate group of His twelve disciples, who later became the leaders and pillars of the church. This means His message of loving one another has to be fulfilled within the church among his followers. As Bonhoeffer (1966) stated:

Everything the disciple does is part of the common life of the Church of which he is a member. . . . Wherever we are, whatever we do, everything happens 'in the body' in the Church, 'in Christ.' . . . Among Christians the whole range of human relationships is embraced by Christ and the church. (p. 286)

The second thing we need to sincerely consider as we read John 13:34-35 is the standard of our love toward all Christians. Jesus says: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." The command states that as Jesus loved me with an unconditional love, I have to love all Christians the same way. Undoubtedly, it is a very difficult standard to follow. However, Jesus is very clear that there is no exception to this rule.

A third aspect worthy of consideration in this passage is the result of loving one another as Christians. "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (John 13:35). Here we find a close relation between loving one another and

evangelism. According to Jesus, true Christianity is accredited when sincere love is practiced among Christians. It will cause unbelievers to recognize the authenticity of those who claim to be Jesus' disciples. Schaeffer (1970) is very helpful here when he said:

In the midst of the world, in the midst of our present dying culture, Jesus is giving a right to the world. Upon his authority he gives the world the right to judge whether you and I are born-again Christians on the basis of our observable love toward all Christians. That's pretty frightening. Jesus turns to the world and says, 'I've something to say to you. On the basis of my authority, I give you a right: you may judge whether or not an individual is a Christian on the basis of the love he shows to all Christians.' . . . Here Jesus is talking about our responsibility as individuals and as groups to so love all other true Christians that the world will have no valid reason for saying that we are not Christians. . . . We cannot expect the world to believe that the Father sent the Son, that Jesus' claims are true, and that Christianity is true, unless the world sees some reality of the oneness of true Christians. . . . This is the whole point: The world is going to judge whether Jesus has been sent by the Father on the basis of something that is open to observation. (pp. 13-15, 21)

Proclaiming doctrinal truths is not enough to make Christ attractive to non-believers. Professing holiness as a sign of one's identity as a Christian is also not enough. Schaeffer continues:

You cannot expect the world to understand doctrinal differences, especially in our day when the existence of truth and absolutes are considered unthinkable even as concepts. We cannot expect the world to understand that on the basis of the holiness of God we are having a different kind of difference because we are dealing with God's absolutes. But when they see differences among true Christians who also show an observable unity, this will open the way for them to consider the truth of Christianity and Christ's claim that the Father did send the Son. . . . Our love must have a form that the world may observe; it must be seeable. (pp. 31, 34)

What will make Christianity relevant and of a great importance will be the unconditional love manifested among those who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ. In days where absolute truth is not relevant anymore, a true sense of community expressed by a sincere love among the members of the church will be the key to present the pertinent message of the gospel of Jesus Christ in a successful way.

Another significant lesson in Jesus' ministry and teaching is the one known as the Golden Rule. "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:30). This statement is presented in the context of both loving the enemies and judging others. Jesus manifests his divine authority when he includes in His lesson the words "But I tell you," emphasizing his authority as the Divine Messiah (Luke 6:27). Jesus establishes a new way of living where His followers must love their enemies, do good to those that hate them, pray for those that mistreat them, and give to anyone who asks (Luke 6:27-30). In addition to this, and after declaring the Golden Rule, Jesus continues teaching the necessity of not judging and condemning others. Forgiving and giving to others must be the lifestyle of those that claim to be his disciples (Luke 6:37-38).

In this lesson Jesus summarizes the very core of human relations: Treat others as you want to be treated in spite of the circumstances or situation.

Writing on Jesus' Golden Rule, Maxwell gives a list of things that he believes all human beings have in common when it comes to how they want to be treated. According to Maxwell (2003b), everybody wants to be valued, appreciated, trusted, respected, and understood. Also people commonly do not want others to take advantage of them (p. 6).

It means that what we demand we need to be willing to give. If we demand to be valued, we need to value others as well. If we demand to be understood, we need to work hard to understand others as well. If we want others to respect us, we must start respecting others. If we want other people to love us, we first need to love them. According to Jesus the rule declares that we will be treated as we treat others.

Recorded in the Gospel according to John is Jesus' powerful prayer for the believers. A few hours before his arrest, Jesus prayed:

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23)

In this powerful prayer we find Jesus' intention and dream for his church in terms of human relationships. In addition to that we find Jesus' plan to reach people for his kingdom.

1. The main purpose for this prayer is unity among the believers "that all of them may be one" (v. 21).
2. Unity among believers must be measured or based in the unity the Father and Son have, "Father, just as you are in me and I am in you" (v. 21).
3. To be united represents to be in the Father and Son, "May they also be in us" (v. 21).
4. As a result of this unity among the believers, the world will know that Jesus Christ is the Messiah sent by God; "so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (v. 21).
5. Jesus emphasizes again the importance of becoming one "that they may be one as we are one" (v. 22).
6. Jesus not only expects that His followers remain united, He expects a complete or perfect unity, "May they be brought to complete unity" (v. 23).

The Concept of Good Relationships in the Pauline Writings

After a series of theological discussions to the Church of Rome, the apostle Paul establishes that these arguments are not useful unless the church applies those theological ideas and beliefs in its daily life. Dealing with the church in general he says, “So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Rom 12:5). Although the church may be formed by different people with different cultural backgrounds, they are one in Jesus with the duty of considering themselves as members of the same body by their actions. Dunn (1998) echoed this idea when he said, “It is noticeable that the first more extensive theme which Paul embarks on in Romans 12 is the metaphor of the Christian community as ‘one body in Christ’ (12.5)” (p. 548). In addition to that Dunn stated:

Much the most plausible source of the imagery is the use of the metaphor of the body elsewhere in precisely the way that Paul most consistently uses it, the body as a vital expression of the unity of a community despite the diversity of its members. (p. 550)

According to Paul the grace of Christ must be manifested in the sense of community within the local church. Each member has to be responsible for the welfare of his brother and sister by expressing a sincere cooperation for the common good. Again Dunn (1998) is helpful when he stated:

Paul shifts the corporate image of the Christian community from that of nation state (historic Israel) to that of body politic, that is, from a community identified by ethnic and traditional boundary markers to one whose members are drawn from different nationalities and social strata and whose prosperity depends on their mutual cooperation and their working harmoniously together. The identity of the Christian assembly as ‘body,’ however, is given not by geographical location or political allegiance but by their common allegiance to Christ. The implication is clear that only when that common allegiance is given primacy in mutual relations can the potential factional differences be transformed into the necessary mutual cooperation for the common good. This shift in identity factors and boundary markers, therefore, gives a different dynamic to the understanding of community, where the key distinguishing

factor is a sense of mutual interdependence in Christ, expressed in a mutual responsibility one for another which manifests the grace of Christ. (pp. 551-552)

This same message is clearly addressed by the apostle when he writes to the church of Corinth,

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. (1 Cor 1:10)

Paul emphasizes,

1. Harmony among those who consider Jesus as the Lord
2. No divisions
3. Maintaining unity at any risk
4. And having the same mind and purpose.

This same idea is strengthened as Paul continues, “Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others” (1 Cor 10:24). Closing up his message to the church of Corinth he said, “Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Cor 13:11). Paul obviously thought a good relationship among the believers, though not easy, was an evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit. As Dunn (1998) stated:

. . . what draws and keeps believers together for Paul was not simply a common membership of a congregation, but the common experience of the Spirit. It was the awareness that their experience of the Spirit was one in which others had also shared which provided the bond of mutual understanding and sympathy. . . . The practical theological corollary to this is that the community of the Spirit is in no sense a human creation. (p. 562)

In Eph 4:1 Paul the apostle urges the church members to live a genuine Christian life worthy of the calling they had received. Interestingly enough Paul describes what he has in mind when he calls the Church to live a true Christianity:

1. Being completely humble
2. Being completely gentle
3. Being patient
4. Bearing with one another in love
5. Making every effort possible to keep peace and unity
6. Speaking the truth to the neighbor because there is just one body
7. Controlling anger and not letting it offend the neighbor
8. Speaking not to destroy but to build, encourage, and benefit those who listen
9. Getting rid of all bitterness, anger, slander, and any form of malice
10. And forgiving each other as Christ forgave the church (Eph 4:2, 3, 23, 31, 32).

It is evident that for Paul good relations, unity, and love among the believers was not an option. As Dunn (1998) stated:

Paul's vision was of the structure of the community as one of free fellowship. . . . But unless it is also a manifestation of love, it is not the Spirit of Christ behind it. At the same time, without the Spirit the discernment of what really matters is not possible. And without love even the most self-sacrificial, spiritual, and even faithful acts can be worth nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3). (pp. 557, 669)

Throughout his letters the message of love, care, and consideration with each other is observed over and over. For instance, the apostle insists, "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:1). Furthermore, Paul expresses his desire for unity in love when he says, "My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love" (Col 2:2). For Paul, loving one another in the context of the church is very evident. He says, "Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other" (1 Thess 4:9). "May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance" (2

Thess 3:5). Paul's call to the Christians is to be proactive and work hard to experience peace and love within the church context: He insists, "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14).

The Concept of Good Relationships in the Epistles of John

In 1997, Rensberger concluded that in John's epistles, especially 1 John, the theme the apostle addresses to his audience is a parallel between Christology and mutual love. John establishes a theological relationship between these two concepts based on the idea that God is love incarnated himself and His love is the major expression of His revelation to humans.

In fact, Rensberger (1997, p. 37) stated that love is the first theme addressed extensively in 1 John. He said:

The centrality of love can be seen in the things for which it is the signal and test: knowing and abiding in God (2:3-6; 3:23-24; 4:7-8, 12, 16), walking in the light (2:9-11), being God's child (2:29; 3:10; 4:7), eternal life (3:14), confidence at the judgment (4:17-18), and our own love for God (4:20-5:1). People do not become children of God by their own good deeds; to be born of God is a gift of God's love, which calls forth and enables Christians' love (3:1-2; 4:9-11, 19). Yet love united to Christological confession is the one unfailing test of those who truly are God's children (4:7; 5:1). Where there is no love at work, there is no Christianity. This implies that Christianity is not purely a matter of individual salvation, since love cannot be practiced by one person alone. Knowing God, loving, being confident of eternal life, all the things that we might consider 'spiritual' are real only in concrete living in community with other human beings. 'Beloved, let us love one another.' (4:7)

The message of love and unity is overwhelming in 1 John. In other words, for John to be in the light, the path of Jesus Christ is measured in the love and good relationships with his brother. The beloved disciple said:

I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his

brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him. (1 John 2:8-11)

For John, love among brothers and sisters is the core of the Christian message.

“This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another” (1 John 3:11). “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18). “Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11). “No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us” (1 John 4:11).

The Concept of Good Relationships in Ellen G. White Writings

In his doctoral dissertation Lawrance, (2005, p. 176) mentioned that Adventists recognize the writings of Ellen G. White as authoritative especially in the area of practical theology. Even though her writings do not establish any doctrine or theology, they do make a difference in how Adventists practice biblical theology. As Knight (1997) penned it, “Ellen White’s writings have been a blessing to countless thousands who have read them during the past century and a half. They have proved to be a helpful and reliable guide to those in all walks of life” (p. 7). For these reasons, we turn to her writings to find practical advice on relationships, especially within the church.

In his study, Douglas (1998) observed that for Ellen White “love as a principle and not as a feeling” was common in her writings. This clear understanding of love set her apart from other religious writers during her life time and after. White (1948) said:

Love is an active principle; it keeps the good of others continually before us, thus restraining us from inconsiderate actions lest we fail of our object in winning souls to Christ. Love seeks not its own. It will not prompt men to seek their own ease and indulgence of self. It is the respect we render to I that so often hinders the growth of love. (p. 124)

This kind of love was the result of an intimate relationship with God. In other words, she believed that to fail in loving, understanding, and forgiving the neighbor was a result of a life disconnected from Jesus, the source of love. White (1948) advised Christians to

seek for unity; cultivate love and conformity to Christ in all things. He is the source of unity and strength; but you have not sought for Christian unity that you might knit hearts together in love. . . . If you do as God would have you, His blessing will come into the church. (p. 348)

In *Mind, Character, and Personality*, a compilation of White's ideas (1977), this idea is expanded:

The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties, though there will be much of this to do, but union with Christ. Picture a large circle, from the edge of which are many lines all running toward the center. The nearer these lines approach the center, the nearer they are to one another. Thus it is in the Christian life. The closer we come to Christ, the nearer we shall be to one another. (pp. 501-502)

For White, loving relationships among church members was extremely important because God is dishonored every time the church fails in putting into practice this principle. The opposite is also true. "Divisions in the church dishonor the religion of Christ before the world and give occasion to the enemies of truth to justify their course" (White, 1995b, p. 211). On the other hand, "God is glorified as His people unite in harmonious action" (1977, p. 502).

Moreover, White wrote extensively about unity in the church as a main characteristic of God's transforming power among its members. "One of the strongest evidences of true conversion is love to God and man. Those who accept Jesus as their Redeemer have a deep, sincere love for others of like precious faith" (White, 1911, p.

263). For her, unity was an undeniable evidence of the Holy Spirit at work among the believers. White (1911) emphasized:

The Lord in His wisdom has arranged that by means of the close relationship that should be maintained by all believers, Christians shall be united to Christian and church to church. Thus the human instrumentality will be enabled to co-operate with the divine. Every agency will be subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all the believers will be united in an organized and well-directed effort to give to the world the glad tidings of the grace of God. (p. 164)

In addition White (1988) stated:

We have need of divine illumination. Every individual is striving to become a center of influence, and until God works for His people, they will not see that subordination to God is the only safety for any soul. His transforming grace upon human hearts will lead to unity that has not yet been realized, for all who are assimilated to Christ will be in harmony with one another. The Holy Spirit will create unity. (p. 296)

Interestingly enough for White, good and loving relationships among the believers was a powerful tool to reach unbelievers. She manifested a strong connection between evangelism and loving, caring relationships within the church. People might question doctrine and the belief system of the church but they would never be able to question the oneness of the church and they would be drawn to it. Regarding this idea White (1995c) stated:

The evidence that the world cannot withstand and controvert, that God has sent Jesus into the world as its Redeemer, is in the oneness of the church. Their unity and harmony is the convincing argument. Satan is therefore constantly at work to prevent this harmony and union, that in witnessing the bickerings, strifes, and dissension, unbelievers shall become disgusted with Christianity, and fastened in unbelief and infidelity. God is dishonored by those who profess the truth while they are at variance with one another. (p. 269)

White (1911) declares plainly that the early church connected evangelism and unity. She said:

To the early church had been entrusted a constantly enlarging work—that of establishing centers of light and blessing wherever there were honest souls willing to give themselves to the service of Christ. The proclamation of the gospel was to be

world-wide in its extent, and the messengers of the cross could not hope to fulfill their important mission unless they should remain united in the bonds of Christian unity, and thus reveal to the world that they were one with Christ in God. Had not their divine Leader prayed to the Father, “Keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are”? And had He not declared of His disciples, “The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world”? Had He not pleaded with the Father that they might be “made perfect in one,” “that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me”? John 17:11, 14, 23, 21. Their spiritual life and power was dependent on a close connection with the One by whom they had been commissioned to preach the gospel. (p. 90)

Commenting on John 13, White (1911) gives a strong and radical statement when she said:

A new commandment I give unto you,” Christ said, “That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” John 13:34. What a wonderful statement; but, oh, how poorly practiced! In the church of God today brotherly love is sadly lacking. Many who profess to love the Saviour do not love one another. Unbelievers are watching to see if the faith of professed Christians is exerting a sanctifying influence upon their lives; and they are quick to discern the defects in character, the inconsistencies in action. Let Christians not make it possible for the enemy to point to them and say, Behold how these people, standing under the banner of Christ, hate one another. Christians are all members of one family, all children of the same heavenly Father, with the same blessed hope of immortality. Very close and tender should be the tie that binds them together. (p. 550)

White called Seventh-day Adventists to a high standard, to be true imitators of Christ as a real sign of the faith they profess. According to White, loving one another and building a close bond of unity and fellowship is a strong evidence of a Christ-like character. White (1911) admonished:

“Let us not love in word,” the apostle writes, “but in deed and in truth.” The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within. It is the atmosphere of this love surrounding the soul of the believer that makes him a savor of life unto life and enables God to bless his work. (p. 551)

In addition to this White (1903) shares how Christ himself saw and treated others as an example for the church to follow. She said:

In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace, in “the beauty of the Lord our God.” Psalm

90:17. Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man's true ideal, He awakened, for its attainment, both desire and faith. In His presence souls despised and fallen realized that they still were men, and they longed to prove themselves worthy of His regard. In many a heart that seemed dead to all things holy, were awakened new impulses. To many a despairing one there opened the possibility of a new life. Christ bound men to His heart by the ties of love and devotion; and by the same ties He bound them to their fellow men. With Him love was life, and life was service. (p. 80)

Among other things manifested in Christ-like character according to White are encouraging and loving words, courtesy, and high morals as we approach others. Again, White is helpful when she stated:

Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others. Let them reveal Christlike forbearance and patience, speaking no hasty words, using the talent of speech to build one another up in the most holy faith. Let them labor in Christlike love for those outside the fold. . . . As they work and pray in Christ's name, their numbers will increase. (1976, p. 38)

Regarding the importance of courtesy White (1995a) said:

The children of God the world over are one family, and the same spirit of love and conciliation should govern them. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10), is the teaching of our Saviour. The cultivation of a uniform courtesy, a willingness to do to others as we would wish them to do to us, would annihilate half the ills of life. The spirit of self-aggrandizement is the spirit of Satan; but the heart in which the love of Christ is cherished, will possess that charity which seeketh not her own. Such will heed the divine injunction, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others (Phil. 2:4). (p. 47)

Moreover, in *Mind, Character and Personality* she deals with the importance of courtesy and its influence not only among believers but more importantly among unbelievers when she stated:

The good qualities which many possess are hidden, and instead of attracting souls to Christ they repulse them. If these persons could see the influence of their uncourteous ways and unkind expressions upon unbelievers and how offensive is such conduct in the sight of God, they would reform their habits, for a lack of courtesy is one of the greatest stumbling blocks to sinners. Selfish, complaining, sour Christians bar the way so that sinners do not care to approach Christ. . . . Let Christ be seen in all that you do. Let all see that you are living epistles of Jesus Christ. . . . Be

lovable. Let your life win the hearts of all who are brought in contact with you. . . . Every word you speak, every action you perform, has an influence for good or evil upon those who associate with you; and, oh! how necessary it is that you have Christ dwelling in your heart by faith, that your words may be words of life, and your works, the works of love. (White, 1977, p. 433)

White very clearly stated that unity and love within the church would reveal Christ's grace and manner more than anything else including sermons and arguments (1946, p. 342). She gives a very practical thought which includes a forgiving attitude and a mind always ready to accept and respect others when she said:

If we keep uppermost in our minds the unkind and unjust acts of others we shall find it impossible to love them as Christ has loved us; but if our thoughts dwell upon the wondrous love and pity of Christ for us, the same spirit will flow out to others. We should love and respect one another, notwithstanding the faults and imperfections that we cannot help seeing. Humility and self-distrust should be cultivated, and a patient tenderness with the faults of others. This will kill out all narrowing selfishness and make us large-hearted and generous. (1956, p. 121)

White taught, therefore, that love has to be considered as a principle and not as a feeling, that love between the believers in the context of the church is the result of an intimate relationship with God and the sign of a true conversion. This kind of love is also an evidence of the Holy Spirit at work among the believers. Furthermore, failing to put this principle into practice will result in dishonor to God. On the other hand, God will be glorified when in his church an atmosphere of love, care, and understanding reigns. For White, loving and building one another was a strong evidence of a Christ-like character which will draw others to Jesus himself.

Summary

The theology of good relationships in the Bible and writings of Ellen White is very extensive and resounding. The Old Testament presents interpersonal problems such as lack of love, poor communication, unforgiving attitude, conflicts, and divisions as

direct results of the fall. On the other hand, God's character, which is love, is best exemplified in the context of marriage where man and woman reveal God's image within the framework of community and love. In God's original plan, man was never intended to be isolated; on the contrary, man is a social being that needs others in order to grow, improve, and develop all the faculties the Creator placed in him. Moreover, the Ten Commandments reveal how important it is to God that humanity understands the meaning of love and respect for one another as an immediate consequence of loving and respecting Him.

The teachings of Jesus in the New Testament about love, care, respect, and understanding for each other are significant. Jesus was interested in people so he mingled and interacted with them in order to touch them and reach them. The gospel then is about people and not only about doctrines and systems. According to Jesus the standard of our love for our neighbor is found in his own love for the humankind. He commands us to love everybody including our enemies. At a time when moral absolutes and truth are not considered important by many, the church has to proclaim the gospel by revealing true community, love, and acceptance.

For the apostle Paul theology without practice is nothing. He calls Christians to live their theology in the context of community. He emphasizes love and unity throughout his letters. John's epistles, written by the beloved disciple, are saturated with love. For this disciple the core of the Christian message is love. He insists that the path of Jesus is measured in love and good relationships among the believers.

Ellen White also wrote extensively about the importance of loving one another especially among believers. She states that love is not a feeling but a principle. This kind

of love is the result of an intimate relation with God. Moreover, God will be glorified when his church is united and demonstrates love for one another. The opposite is also true. He will be dishonored when those who profess to be his children do not follow the example he left behind. For White unity in the church is an evidence of God's transforming power which cannot be denied by unbelievers. Therefore, it is a powerful tool for evangelism.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONCEPT OF GOOD RELATIONSHIPS IN CURRENT LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature available on the subject of improving interpersonal relationships is vast. Even though this subject has been prominent in the past, in recent years materials published on this topic have dramatically increased. The renewed focus on this theme has led me to read many different authors and consider their positions, advice, and conclusions. Some of these writers, although considered as noted authors and authorities in the field of relationships, offered little positive insight, advice, or moral reflection.

I have limited this chapter to an examination of the framework of healthy relationships. Since even this focus is very broad and extensive I selected a bibliography that focuses on the following: (1) good relationships as the basis for a healthy society; (2) good relationships in the business arena; (3) good relationships and leadership; (4) good relationships and the connection between spirituality and evangelism particularly as it touches and reaches Post-modern society; and (5) the receiving of others into the church family.

Bearing in mind the apparent lack of positive and practical insight from several authorities on this subject, I decided to concentrate upon positive and practical ideas and tools which harmonize with the biblical teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I selected the following books for this review: *Winning With People*; *Caring Enough to Forgive and Caring Enough to Not Forgive*; *How to Win Friends and Influence People*; *There is No Such Thing as Business Ethics*; *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School*; *Be a People Person*; *I Used to Be Perfect*; *True Spirituality*; *The Wounded Healer*; *The Pastor's Handbook on Interpersonal Relationships*; *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*; *Leadership From the Inside Out*; *Building a Contagious Church*; *The Next Generation*; *Postmodern Pilgrims*; *Present Truth in the Real World*; *Natural Church Development*; *People Skills*; *Relationships*; *Love the Life you Live*; *Coping With Difficult People*; *Forgive and Forget*; *I Forgive You but. . .*; *Loving Enough to Care*; *Evangelism That Works*; *Your Personality Tree*; *High Maintenance Relationships*; and others.

Some of the authors considered for this study were John Maxwell, David A. Augsburger, Lewis Smedes, Henri Nouwen, Jard DeVille, Florence Littauer, Les Parrott, Leslie Parrott, George Barna, Jon Paulien, Francis A. Schaeffer, Lourdes E. Morales-Gudmundsson, Michael G. Zey, George Knight, Kevin Harney, Robert Bolton, and others. It is my hope that this literature review will provide understanding for individuals seeking to know today's major views on relationships.

Good Relationships as the Basis for a Healthy Society

When the term "healthy society" is used, it does not refer to a society or community exempt from misunderstanding, problems, and conflicts. Whenever two or more persons are involved in a relationship there is going to be tension, misinterpretation, hurt feelings and conflict. Maxwell (2004) declared that conflict is unavoidable when he stated, "The only way to avoid conflict is to isolate ourselves from all other people on the

planet” (p. 110). Therefore, when it comes to good relationships, a healthy society is formed by those that understand the right approach in relating with others considering that “No relationship exists long without tensions. No community continues long without conflicts” (Augsburger, 1981, Prologue).

An author often recognized because of his emphasis on the importance of establishing good relations at home, business, and work is Dale Carnegie. In the second decade of the twentieth century in New York City Carnegie began teaching seminars dealing with people skills in business, social, and everyday life. He pioneered work in this area when he offered practical principles to improve interpersonal relations. In a matter of few years he earned distinction and his seminars became famous both in America and around the world.

The premise of Carnegie in his seminars and books is the concept that success, regardless of the culture and profession, is found in the ability to deal with people. He rightly stated, “When dealing with people, let us remember we are not dealing with creatures of logic. We are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures bristling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity” (1936, p. 27).

This thought simplifies a guideline, which should be carefully considered. Every individual has a history formed by culture, traumas, and situations beyond his or her control. These conditions form an active part in our daily lives. As we mingle with people and relate with them in one way or another we need to understand they may probably have unresolved emotional issues that shape their daily lives that they may not even be aware of. Therefore, our approach should be more emotional than logical.

We frequently address these complex matters with an intellectual or logical approach because in relating with others we seek something in exchange. This may very well be a reason why relationships fracture on a daily basis in society. There is a crying need to endeavor to understand others and get along with them. Stanley Allyn (as cited by Maxwell, 2004) pointed out, “The most useful person in the world today is the man or woman who knows how to get along with other people. Human relations is the most important science in living” (p. 1).

Carnegie (1936) cited the late Alfred Adler, a well recognized Viennese psychologist to establish the fact that “it is the individual who is not interested in his fellow men who has the greatest difficulties in life and provides the greatest injury to others. It is from among such individuals that all human failures spring” (p. 59).

Importance of Good Relationships in Business

In his book, *There Is No Such Thing as Business Ethics*, Maxwell pointed out that in his life J. C. Penney knew the importance of having good relationship with people in the business arena. Penney’s father taught him the importance of hard work, honesty, and good interaction with people based on the principle of the Golden Rule. In this study, Maxwell (2003b) observed that while working in different stores Penney always treated others as he wanted to be treated:

Penney had a vision for a chain of stores all across the western United States. His method was to find honest, industrious men and teach them his method of business. . . . And what were those original stores called? He named them for his philosophy of business. They were called the Golden Rule stores. “Hence,” explained Penney, “in setting up a business under the name and meaning of the Golden Rule, I was publicly binding myself, in my business relations, to a principle which had been a real and intimate part of my family upbringing. To me the sign on the store was much more than a trade name.” Though Penny later changed the names on the stores when his

organization incorporated during expansion, he never stopped living and working by the Golden Rule, putting partnership ahead of profits. (p. 66)

Penney's method has been applied by dozens of businessmen and entrepreneurs such as Mary Kay Ash, the founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, who once advised, "Everyone has an invisible sign hanging from his neck saying, 'Make me feel important.' Never forget this message when working with people" (Maxwell, 2003b, p. 27). Maxwell further states that a survey of one hundred self-made businessmen, who later became millionaires, revealed one common factor: These highly successful individuals saw only the good in people (p. 37).

In his study, McCormick (1984) stated that effectiveness in business is associated with the ability to know and interact with people, because business situations are always people situations. McCormick stated:

Whether I'm selling or buying, whether I'm hiring or (in our capacity as consultants) being hired; whether I'm negotiating a contract or responding to someone's else demands, I want to know where the other person is coming from. I want to know the other person's real self. (p. 5)

A key factor, then, which determines effectiveness and progress in business, is in understanding the importance of relationships and in gaining insight into people's thought processes. Studies confirmed that success is measured by 15% theoretical knowledge of the product and 85% understanding and knowledge of the persons responsible for the product (Maxwell, 1984, p. 47).

Connection Between Spirituality and Good Relationships

Perhaps one of the pervasive misconceptions about Adventism is that it has been defined in the light of doctrines or external factors. It is common to see churches that

demand or are satisfied with acceptable external behavior. In other words, the Christian life has been identified as a mere collection of good deeds and actions.

Spirituality does not necessarily mean a thorough understanding of the fundamental beliefs. It is not defined by the amount of biblical knowledge the person possesses or the ability to teach it to others. To be a spiritual person means that the Spirit of God is the total owner and the One who is in control. His guidance based on a loving relationship is what makes someone spiritual.

The Scriptures are clear that good deeds are not only very important, but also necessary in the Christian journey. Yet, while the church does affirm what the Bible teaches in terms of good works, sometimes sincere Christians apply this truth, not in direct relation with the neighbor, but in a strict fulfillment of the church standards and norms. Many of these norms have been established because of culture and local society instead of biblical principles.

One biblical principle that should be considered in every religious, and more importantly in every nonreligious context, is that love is an internal, never an external factor. In other words, love has its external manifestations but its root is totally internal. Therefore, all the good work that a person does must be a consequence, not a cause of his internal love.

Some authors define sin as the love centered on the wrong object (Knight, 2001, p. 18). It means that I can do something good with the wrong intention. If the object of my internal love is I, therefore, whatever I do even if it is good is sin because “everything that does not come from faith is sin” (Rom 14:23).

Thus, church leaders and laity need to understand that it is not only important what we do but also how we do it. The local church should be taught to adapt or change its approach from religious works to spirituality. Spirituality comes when internal love is focused on the right object, or better said, in the right person—God. In the book of the Law, God commands, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deut 6:4 NIV). God continues saying, “For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in his days, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you” (Deut 30:16). According to this passage the right order in the religious experience is to love, to walk and to obey (keep his commands); evidently, loving God results in walking and obeying Him.

Having a real and personal love relationship with God will, among other things, result in the receiving of the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). These fruits are what make one person’s works spiritual and not merely religious. Most if not all of these fruits must be evident in our relationship with our neighbors. In other words, having a right relationship with God will result in a right relationship with the neighbors. The horizontal relation (with the neighbor), when a person does not look at his own good, but at another man’s good, is a consequence of the vertical relation (with God). As Knight (2001) stated:

If people are not passing on the love of God to their neighbors, it is because they don’t have it. . . . Love is not only the one point on which the judgment turns; it is also the point by which Jesus identifies His disciples. To be a follower of Christ is to be a lover of God and fellow beings. (pp. 96, 97)

In order to differentiate between religious acts and spirituality, it is important to recognize that spirituality is manifested in practical relationships on a daily basis.

Schaeffer (1971) is very helpful here:

You will remember that we have previously seen that true spirituality has meaning in all the practical relationships of life: husband–wife, parent–child, employer–employee. These things must be taught in the church as an aspect of the conscious side of sanctification, to be understood and then acted upon by choice. The environment of the local church or other Christian group must be conducive for these things to grow. Such growth will never be once for all, but, like all things in our life, a moment-by-moment process. (p. 178)

Instead of the structural system within the local church being the place where members methodically gather to receive theoretical knowledge of the word of God, a system teaching through sermons, series, and seminars should be implemented in the local church in order that its members may understand, not only the clarity of the theology, but the beauty of putting it into daily practice.

Another aspect of spirituality is the understanding that one's legitimacy and value does not rest in one's possessions, status, or considering oneself superior to one's neighbor. My value rests in what God thinks of me. Since I am precious and honorable in the sight of God (Isa 40:3) and since he loves me with an everlasting love (Jer 31:3) I should, in confidence, extend this honor, value, consideration, and love toward my neighbor.

Spirituality then is the recognition of God's greatness and glory and the continual seeking of His will. It is also the virtue of showing compassion and helping our neighbor in a sincere and altruistic way. As Nouwen (1972) said, "Compassion is born when we discover in the center of our own existence not only that God is God and man is man, but also that our neighbor is really our fellow man" (p. 41).

Luke, the author of Acts of the Apostles attributes success in evangelism to the authentic guidance of the Holy Spirit (1:8). Receiving God's Spirit along with His gifts and fruits is how a person can become spiritual as well as a soul winner. Naturally, when people see the kind of relationships Christians have with each other, what they have will be not only attractive to them but also a real evidence of the power of the Gospel. As Schaeffer (1971) stated:

Christians are to help each other on to increasingly substantial healing on the basis of the finished work of Christ. This is our calling. This is part of our richness in Christ: the reality of true spirituality, the Christian life, in relation to my separation from my fellowmen including those fellow men who are my brothers and sisters in Christ in the Church as a whole and in the local congregation or other Christian group. It is not to be practiced in a dull, ugly way; there is to be a thing of beauty, observed by those within, and those outside. This is an important part in preaching the gospel to the humanity still in revolution against God; but more than this, it is the only thing that is right on the basis of the existence of the personal God and on the basis of what Christ did for us in history, on the cross. And having come this far, true spirituality—the Christian life—flows on into the total culture. (p. 180)

A church will make a difference in the community when the members manifest good relationships with others that mirror their relationship with God (DeVille, 1995, p. 205). This will be possible when they understand the meaning and implication of God's grace in their lives. In other words, once the church members take to heart the fact that God has granted them acceptance, forgiveness, fellowship and salvation, they will freely and generously extend this grace to others.

Connection Between Leadership and Good Relationships

One of the most common misunderstandings of leadership, especially in the context of ministry, is that leadership is titles, positions, and status. However, in recent years our culture has turned to a more personal understanding of leadership; therefore, the church should also work in the reality of this new era. In his book, *The 21 Irrefutable*

Laws of Leadership, Maxwell (1998) defines leadership as influence. He states that a person that does not have influence will not be able to lead others; he calls it the Law of Influence (p. 11).

In a general sense we all are people of influence. It is uncommon to find a man or a woman who does not have some leadership over other people. In fact, even without knowing it an individual may have a negative or positive influence on others. A true Christian leader is one who is aware of the influence he has over others and who motivates and encourages them for the good. It means that a leader is not only interested in the welfare of people but is one who treats them in a way that will lead them to love, respect, and follow him. The ability to cause others to respect, follow, trust, and love a leader is fundamental to Christian leadership.

If influence is the cornerstone for successful leadership, the way to get there is to follow the road of the heart. Maxwell (1998) continues,

Effective leaders know that you first have to touch people's hearts before you ask them for a hand. That is the Law of Connection. . . . You can't move people to action unless you first move them with emotion. The heart comes before the head. (p. 101)

Moving people through emotion is not playing with or manipulating them. When engaged in Christian leadership, true love is the strongest motivation for the leader to emulate. The object of this love as mentioned previously has to be God himself. As Harney (2007) says, "A heart passionately in love with God is the starting point of a healthy life and ministry" (p. 27).

Effective ministry becomes difficult because of people; therefore, some Christian leaders shut off their hearts and build walls to protect them from being framed or hurt. Even though one tends to avoid problematic people, this is, in general, a wrong approach. "Christian leaders are called to love God and those they lead" (Harney, 2007, p. 34). A

leader has to reflect Jesus' heart. When the heart is weak it is difficult to be healthy in any area of leadership. The opposite is also true of a heart full of love and compassion. Thus, inspired by Jesus and moved by his love for both God and people, a leader should learn to develop skills to reach the heart of his followers.

One of these skills is forgiveness. As stated previously, ministry is challenged with such a variety of minds and backgrounds. People either consciously or unconsciously may be harmful to each other. A leader not only needs to consider forgiveness as a permanent attitude but should teach it to his followers in a church setting. In this regard Harney (2007) said,

There is also no better place to learn the art of forgiveness than in the life of the church. The church is filled with people. People are broken and sinful. Spend enough time in the church and you will be hurt. And when you are nursing the wounds and still feeling the sharp pain inflicted by a brother or sister, you will hear Jesus' voice calling you to forgive. (p. 34)

Connection Between Evangelism and Good Relationships

If there is a teaching the Seventh-day Adventist church considers important and necessary it is the teaching of Great Commission. Before ascending to heaven Jesus said to His followers in that particular generation but also in the generations to come the following words,

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Mat 28: 18-20)

Seventh-day Adventists have taken these words seriously and have understood that the Great Commission is not only one of the basic teachings and commands of the Bible but it is the reason for the existence of the church. In the opening statement of her book *Acts of the Apostles*, White (1911) said:

The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," the final and full display of the love of God. (p. 9)

It is the church's calling, duty, responsibility, and privilege to go to every corner of the world to make disciples baptizing and teaching people of every ethnic group, race, status, and background. Current information (*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 2000) clearly describes the call and role of the church as one of its fundamental beliefs:

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. (p. 12)

This 11th fundamental belief is of such importance to the church that it has been included in the baptismal vow. Every baptismal candidate either privately or publicly must commit himself or herself to the fulfillment of the evangelism mandate. This confession and commitment has made possible the presence of Seventh-day Adventists in more than 200 countries around the world.

Over the years, Adventists have used a traditional approach in order to reach the community for Christ. This approach has been in the context of both personal and public evangelism with emphasis placed on doctrines, the pillars of Adventism, and prophecy seminars. Even though the Seventh-day Adventist church has a unique and urgent message to share, it is extremely important to follow Christ's method of winning people. White (1942) said:

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them,

ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, “Follow Me.” (p. 143)

There is nothing wrong with teaching the pillars of the Adventist faith; the problem arises in the order in which it is being taught. As part of the remnant movement it is our duty to teach “them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Mat 28:20) but, first, it is extremely important to mingle with people, gain their confidence, show compassion, love, sympathy, and meet their needs. The gospel is about people. After all, God is more interested in people than doctrines or beliefs. Mittelberg (2001) observed that this idea of people mattering to God is one of the hardest to assimilate in our religious system and one of the hardest values to implement (p. 35).

As stated previously the most effective way of sharing the gospel is through relationships. In his study, DeVille (1995) observed that the church cannot sell the gospel as a product but the church has to consider it as a relationship to be shared (p. 180). The Barna Research Group offered a statistical report showing that more than three times as many people accepted the message of the gospel from a personal witness of a friend than from listening to the gospel in a church. In addition to this, the ratio increased to almost 10 times as many that accepted the gospel by way of a friend rather than by an evangelistic campaign at the church (Mittelberg, 2001, p. 70).

Good relationships demonstrated among church members in loving and caring manifestations are still the most powerful tools for reaching others for Christ. Individuals will see Christ’s character in a community that nurtures loving relationships to both believers and non-believers alike when lived as a priority and as a lifestyle. Learning to relate to others, to listen, to practice courtesy and kindness, to address conflict management, to embrace a forgiving attitude, to practice altruism, and to convey respect

and appreciation are some of the virtues every Christian should demonstrate in daily life. All these characteristics are the result of a vertical relation with God and the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

The practice of good relationships among believers is a vital concept, needful of being taught more regularly in our churches. However, more important are the responses given to those who are considered problematic people—those who show disrespect, negativity, and harmful attitudes. DeVille (1995) makes an explicit and truthful point:

It is not enough to love only those who love us. Christ had a great deal to say about that in regard to the Pharisees. The ultimate test of discipleship comes when we are asked to love those who do not care about us. I fear that our congregations need a lot of gospel preaching and teaching in this aspect of following Christ. (pp. 200-201)

Touching and Reaching a Post-Modern Society

Post-modernism is an enormous shift in perspectives in America and throughout the world that has far-reaching consequences. This change presents new viewpoints and assumption about reality. Its impact has expanded beyond our architecture to our dress, our art, our music, and our definition of right and wrong, self-identity, and literature. “Postmodernism is, in short, a reaction against rationalism and scientism that dominated the Enlightenment” (Zustiak, 1996, p. 133).

Zustiak summarizes postmodernism as the reaction and rejection of the following fundamental values:

1. Moral relativism: “What is true for you is true for you, and what is true for me is true for me.”
2. Autonomous individualism: “Our choices are ours alone, determined by our personal pleasure, and not by any higher moral authority.”

3. Narcissistic hedonism: “If it makes you happy, and it doesn’t hurt anyone else, then it’s ok.”

4. Reductive naturalism: “If it cannot be examined in a tangible, scientific manner, then it is not simply unknowable, it is meaningless” (1996, p. 132).

Leonard Sweet summarizes postmodernism as a culture that is experiential, participatory, image-driven, and connected (2000, p. 28). The consequences of these four elements can be traced in abortion, divorce and dysfunction, blended and single families, physical and sexual abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, sex, traumas, and broken mental health (Zustiak, 1996, pp. 42-53, 82-85).

In a culture where drugs, illegitimate sex, tattoos, and piercing are predominant how we can redirect the steps of its followers? There is no doubt that sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with a generation lacking absolute truth, moral standards, and higher authority is not an easy task. Impacting a generation that considers religion as irrelevant and nonsense presents a difficult challenge.

Entire congregations endeavor to share under the direction of their religious leaders the “truth” as presented in the biblical teachings to engage this generation in a better way of living. They forget however that postmodern people do not seek a relationship with organized religion or institutions. Furthermore, they deny this concept of truth. In reality the church provides an attractive context for reaching postmodern people for Christ when the body of Christ is presented, not merely as an institution, but as a family and community. As Mittelberg (2001) stated:

Many of the people we are trying to reach, especially those from the younger generations, come from broken homes. They have felt the pain of living in fragmented family. They know what it feels like to be isolated and alone. They long for deeper community of some kind. They are attracted to whatever source seems to

be able to give it, even in the absence of truth. I think this explains why many of the teachings are illogical and even outlandish, but they offer a sense of family and community that people desperately desire. Consequently, many people put their minds on pause for the sake of seeing their relational needs met. (p. 46)

In a culture where loneliness has become one of the most painful experiences of life, the church needs to demonstrate love, acceptance, and care for those that are alone. Paulien (1993) argued that a basic need of postmodern persons is genuine relationships (p. 127). There is no better place for empty and lonely people to find their place than in the church. As Schmidt (1980) stated: “The image of God is expressed in relationships, community and unity with each other before God” (p. 38). Nouwen (1972) said:

A man can keep his sanity and stay alive as long as there is at least one person who is waiting for him. . . . A dying mother can stay alive to see her son before she gives up the struggle, a soldier can prevent his mental and physical disintegration when he knows that his wife and children are waiting for him. But when ‘nothing and nobody’ is waiting, there is not chance to survive in the struggle for life. (p. 66)

Postmoderns are not looking for explanations but rather for demonstrations. Because they are pragmatic people, they are open to consideration of everything that is genuine and works. One of the things that make Christianity obnoxious to the secular Postmodern is the lack of genuine love and sincerity among Christians. On the other hand, Paulien (1993) said:

if there is one thing above all others that will draw secular people into a church, it is the sense that the people they meet there are living real lives with real struggles and real failures; that they are, in Christ, growing in grace and in love for one another as failing but forgiven human beings. Nothing gives me more courage in faith than to realize that my fellow brothers and sisters struggle with the same things I do and that I can face my problems together with others who care about me. The greatest need of Adventism . . . is to make an end of living a lie. (p. 201)

Receiving Others Into the Church Family

Seventh-day Adventists believe that baptism is a Gospel requirement. It is a prerequisite for participation and membership in local church. Instruction and teaching of the candidates is done previous to baptism. However, this does not mean that once a person is baptized and officially becomes a member, the church will not take care of the spiritual, social, and moral welfare of the individual.

Notwithstanding, churches commonly take for granted the importance of caring, loving, teaching and developing a person after the baptism ceremony. Although baptism is a requirement for church membership, it should not be the motivational factor. Motivation to take this important step of baptism and become part of the church should not only include a clear understanding of biblical teachings, but an expectation to be impacted by individual church members.

Receiving converts into the church family should not begin in the baptistry but earlier when members accept the individuals and make a commitment to walk with them in a loving and friendly relationship. When an individual perceives that he/she is welcomed and accepted into the church family despite his/her religious background, lifestyle or character this makes it easier for him/her to become a true disciple of Jesus.

As previously suggested, Postmoderns are not looking for logical intellectual explanations of teachings, but for a place to belong. When each member accepts the reality that the church is a mission driven force that moves members forward, they will invest their energies in forming a true family and community. This can be effectively accomplished by embracing all the biblical principles of Christian relationships. It will not only become a powerful tool to reach others for Christ but will also confirm to the

members the beauty of being part of a community that is bound by heavenly love.

DeVille (1995), is very clear: “. . . when the gospel is preached and exemplified in love and mutual support within a congregation, a growing number of people will take advantage of the opportunity to contribute in ways that make them feel good about being Christians” (p. 41).

In his study Schwarz (1996), indicated that there is a close connection between the capacity of a church to demonstrate love and its growth potential. This research becomes more specific and practical when he pointed out that a happy church (laughter in the church) and numerical growth are related. Furthermore, he discovered that people are not interested to hear talk about love but want to experience if, in reality, Christian love works. The author concluded that this ability of receiving others with love and happiness is more than a significant factor for church growth; it is, according to his research, a principle of church growth. This principle has unfortunately not been promoted in church growth literature (p. 36).

Another subtle but common element within the church is that people are seeking relief from painful backgrounds and traumas. Many persons have past baggage that is difficult to bear. Looking through this lens, the church needs to understand that as a loving community of faith they can be the healing catalyst for those looking for forgiveness, peace and restoration. Nouwen (1972) specified how the church can become a healing community: “A Christian community is therefore a healing community not because wounds are cured and pains are alleviated, but because wounds and pains become openings or occasions for a new vision” (p. 94). Therefore, a church that gives

genuine and sincere love can be not only the perfect place to belong but also be a healing community where meaning is found in pain, giving opportunity to grow and develop.

Although this concept of receiving others into an environment of love, acceptance, and healing is ideal, in some cases it is not real. In other words, it is very challenging to accomplish such an environment. One of the reasons that church members cannot be healing factors for others is that they themselves are not healed. Burghardt (1991) is very clear: “The first stage in community healing is to heal myself. A community is ailing because its members are not whole” (p. 63).

Lack of self-esteem is another reason we fail to provide healing and love in the context of a Christian community. Evidently, it is impossible to give what we do not possess. If one church member does not love himself it will be impossible for him to love others, especially those looking for love. Even more detrimental is a church member who does not have respect and confidence in himself. For him, a new member trying to integrate into his circle can be seen as a threat and danger. One author stated: “Your image of yourself restricts your ability to build healthy relationships” (Maxwell, 1994, p. 20).

Summary

Considering the abundance of materials published in the area of interpersonal relationships, this chapter was limited to good relationships in the business arena, spirituality issues, leadership, and evangelism as it focuses on reaching the post-modern generation. Regarding good relationships in the business arena, it is important to understand that effectiveness in business is intimately linked with the ability to know and interact well with people. Dealing with the connection between good relationships and

spirituality it is significant that without a real and genuine conversion it is virtually impossible to reflect Christ's character to others. Leadership is influence, and in order to exercise a positive influence on individuals, a leader must love, motivate, respect and encourage others. These qualities and abilities form the foundation of good relationships. Finally, loving and caring relationships observed in the lives of church members are a powerful tool for reaching others for Christ especially those among the postmodern generation who do not respect or care about organized religion or institutions.

CHAPTER 4

A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HAWAI'I AND GENERAL FEATURES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

A Brief Historical Background of Hawai'i

The Hawaiian Islands form the most isolated island chain in the world. Sometime around the fourth or fifth century A.D. islanders traveled 2,500 miles on a large double-hulled canoe from the Marquesas, to the sandy beach of the “Big Island” of Hawai'i. The reasons they left their Marquesas Islands homes are not clear. Some authors like Doughty (2009) have suggested that possible reasons for this migration were war, overpopulation, drought, or a sense of adventure (p. 15).

Some archeologists believe that a second wave of islanders, from Tahiti, arrived around 1000 A.D. In 1768 an expedition was planned to Tahiti so that astronomers could observe the path of the planet Venus across the sun. Englishman James Cook was made captain of the Endeavour, as the ship was named. On his first voyage to the Pacific he explored the shores of Australia and New Zealand. This was the first of three voyages in the next 10 years. During this decade Cook became the leading man of his time in Pacific discovery.

A recent study (Doughty, 2009) indicates that in January 1778 an event occurred that would forever change Hawai'i. Captain James Cook arrived onto Hawai'i's shores. He did not expect to find any islands in that particular location. He was on his way to

Alaska on his third great voyage of discovery, this time to search for the Northwest Passage linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Cook approached the shores of Waimea, Kaua'i, at night on January 9, 1778 (p. 17).

King Kamehameha was the Hawaiian monarch during the time of Captain Cook. Kamehameha was born on the Big Island around 1758 and became the most influential and powerful king in all Hawaiian history. Before his time the Hawaiian Islands had never been considered a single kingdom ruled by one person. Kamehameha united all the islands into one kingdom and became its first king. Captain Cook's experiences had a tremendous impact on the king while he was yet a young man. He matured as one with a brilliant mind and boundless ambition. He died in 1819.

Immediately following Kamehameha's death things began to change dramatically. Traders from all over the world came to Hawai'i and exploited its land, fauna and people. As these merchants became wealthier the local Hawaiians' livelihood became leaner. The United States recognized the Republic of Hawai'i in 1894, with Sanford Dole as its president. It was annexed to the United States in 1898 and became an official US territory in 1900.

Cultural Background of the Island of Oahu, Hawai'i

Cultural diversity in Hawai'i is very rich and unique. Right after Cook's discovery of the Hawaiian Islands in 1778 explorers and traders from other parts of the world including British, French, Russian, Spanish, and American were frequent visitors. Their contact with the islanders eventually led to a mixture of ethnicities between natives (kanaka) and foreigners (haole). Also, around this time in 1820, missionaries, primarily from New England, came to evangelize the Kanakas.

Initially the influx of the Westerners had a terrible impact. They brought firearms, alcohol, gunpowder, and new diseases to the islands. Due to declining fertility, high infant mortality, and emigration the population of Hawai'i began to decline dramatically. Natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tidal waves, fires, etc. contributed to the decrease of the population.

In her study, Nordyke (1977) observed that during the second half of the nineteenth century, island businessmen decided to grow sugar as a primary source of income (p. 22). The development of the sugar industry needed a major labor force. Even though native Hawaiians were considered good laborers and competent people, their numbers were declining. Nordyke noted that about 50% of the Hawaiian male population was hired to work in these plantations. However, more than the approximately 3000 islanders were needed (p. 22).

Around 1852 two hundred men were brought from China to work in the fields. They were offered free passage, three dollars a month wages, room, board, and clothing in return for a promise of work for five years in the plantation (p. 24). In time, many of these workers returned to China while others stayed and married native Hawaiian girls. A good number of these Chinese-Hawaiian families saved much of what they earned in the fields and after they had fulfilled their contracts, moved to town where they started small businesses. Between 1866 and 1884, the population of Chinese in Hawai'i increased from 1200 to more than 18,000. By 1890 Chinese were involved in many trades.

Two very important waves of immigration took place in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The first happened in 1878 when Portuguese arrived in Hawai'i. From this date until 1887 seventeen ships brought approximately 12,000 Portuguese to

the islands. Most of these Portuguese laborers brought their women and children along with them. The second wave occurred in 1885 when Japanese began to immigrate to Hawai'i. By 1890 there were more than 60,000 Japanese in Hawai'i, approximately a fourth of the population. Filipinos contributed to the mixture of Hawai'i's people and culture as well. Between 1907 and 1930 more than 120,000 Filipinos came to the islands.

As stated previously, Hawai'i became an incorporated territory of the United States on June 14, 1900. Sanford B. Dole was reappointed the leader, this time under the title of first governor. Day (1955) states that "Immigration and homesteading were early considered to be the two chief instruments for Americanization in Hawai'i" (p. 233).

According to the 1900 census,

Japanese comprised almost two fifths of the entire population of 154,000 people. Hawaiian and part-Hawaiians comprised about one fourth; Chinese, about one sixth; and Portuguese, about one eighth. Fewer than half the group were citizens, and less than five percent were of Anglo-Saxon blood. (p. 233)

Puerto Ricans, Europeans, Polynesians, and Micronesians, who were brought in as laborers, added to the mix. Between 1903 and 1915 a wave of 8,000 Koreans also arrived.

On March 12, 1959 the congress passed a bill authorizing the admission of the Territory of Hawai'i as the 50th State of the American Union. Following this statehood status, visitors came to the Hawaiian Islands from all over the world. The tremendous surge in the tourism sector gradually surpassed the sugar and pineapple plantation industry as a source of income for Hawai'i.

Not only was the increase in tourism a plus for the economy of the newly formed state but it also contributed to massive waves of immigration especially from the mainland. Many Caucasians and African Americans were integrated into the cultural and

ethnic mix of Hawai'i as they were part of the military stationed mainly on the Island of Oahu. Lind (1980) stated:

The U.S. census reported a startling increase of 50 percent among Caucasians between 1960 and 1970, in contrast with a gain of only 2.5 percent of the total population during the same period. Part of this discrepancy is a consequence of the shift in the definitions of the various ethnic groups by the census, but even allowing for this the increase in the proportion of Caucasians is still exceptionally high. During much of the same period a total of more than 158,000 civilians, chiefly Caucasians, arrived from the U.S. mainland as 'intended residents of Hawai'i,' and an additional 34,668 immigrants arrived from abroad. Obviously not all of the nearly 200,000 civilian immigrants remained permanently, but the addition, even on a temporary basis, of so large number of 'intended residents' to a population of less than 750,000 was bound to magnify substantially the problems of adjustment in a community of great ethnic diversity. (p. 13)

Each year the ethnic mixture of Hawai'i is becoming more diverse. This process became particularly evident following World War II and is still continuing. As a consequence Hawai'i is one of the most diverse places in the world with such a wide variety of ethnic combinations.

With their rich ethnic heritage, the people of Hawai'i have earned the reputation of being one the friendliest and warmest groups of people in the world. As one of the major sources of revenue for the State, tourism has contributed to a positive shift in the way local people treat and receive foreigners.

Hawai'i is known worldwide as the Aloha State. The word, Aloha summarizes Hawaiian culture and thought. Wheeler (2005) stated:

The essence of the aloha spirit is embodied in the word 'aloha', which means 'alo' (in the presence of God) and 'ha' (the breath of life), the presence of God is the breath of life. . . . The word 'aloha' in our contemporary world means 'hello', 'good-bye', and 'love'. Sometimes it is used lightly, but 'aloha' embodies a much deeper concept. 'Aloha' is that special feeling of goodness within us that motivates and inspires us to give the best of ourselves to others. It is the acknowledgement of all that life has given us and our willingness to give back to life. (p. 16)

Brief History of the Congregation

The birth of the Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist church dates back some sixty years. Members from the Central Honolulu Seventh-day Adventist church in the Waipahu-Ewa area took the initiative to plant a church in this part of the Oahu Island. After praying and planning they decided to leave their mother church to start the new Waipahu congregation. They began with a group of 20 people, mostly Filipinos, who for several months met at the home of the Severino and Maria Lacuesta family. A few months following their departure from Honolulu Central Church, the Hawai'i Mission of Seventh-day Adventists recognized them as a Company in 1950 with a membership of 24 charter members. Later, Walter Barber became the first official pastor assigned to the Waipahu Company.

While the Lacuesta family was very hospitable and warm it became challenging to hold meetings week after week in their home. Since the group was now recognized by the Hawaiian Mission, a number of people, who were members of other churches, joined the group either to support the newly born congregation or for geographical convenience. In just a short while the Lacuesta's home was not adequate to accommodate the numbers of people attending.

Members began searching for a more adequate place to worship God. After some inquiries they leased a large room and adjoining bathroom from the Waipahu High School located on Farrington Highway which temporarily met their needs.

The members of the Waipahu Company started an aggressive fundraising plan to acquire a property. Two main fund-raising initiatives are remembered by charter members. The first was a play entitled "Shine in the Corner Where You Are." They

invited friends, relatives and other members on the island of Oahu for this event. The play was presented at the Waipahu High School Auditorium. The sale of tickets and the donations given amounted to a significant sum of money.

The second major fundraiser was the selling of sweetbread. Those members of Portuguese heritage employed their skill to make sweetbread. Different teams baked, wrapped, and sold the bread, and this became a very successful venture. Sweetbread remains a favorite treat in the aloha state to this day.

The hard work was rewarded when they accumulated enough to purchase a property on Awanaii Street where the church building is still located. In ensuing years they purchased adjoining land from neighbors to expand and enhance their ministries.

Since that time, with the help of donors and the Hawai'i Mission of Seventh-day Adventists, they have built a fellowship hall, as well as Kindergarten, Primary, Junior's, and Youth rooms. An elderly gentleman by the name of Robert Pearson added to the congregation's facilities by generously donating funds for the purchase of a piano and an organ. In addition, Pearson offered Christian education scholarships to children and youth from the church for both academy and college. In memory of him, the fellowship room was named "Pearson Hall." Though Mr. Pearson was not a member of the congregation, he was a powerful instrument used by God to supply some of the basic needs of the church.

In its first stages the Waipahu Church was very active in evangelism and outreach. The MV (Missionaries Volunteers) known today as AY (Adventists Youth) met every Sabbath afternoon for training, programs, and spiritual activities. The quality of the Vacation Bible Schools and weeks of prayer were well recognized by both members and

nonmembers of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Oahu. Groups were organized by members to visit within the neighborhood and the surrounding hospitals. The neighborhood door-to-door visitation, the distribution of literature, and the formation of Bible study groups introduced families from the local area to the Lord and to the Adventist message. Hospital visitation gave members opportunity to present the health message, to show care and love, and to encourage future Bible studies. The Dorcas ministry, the choir, and a quartet opened the door to people from neighboring churches and the community, and many began to attend church services on a regular basis.

In absence of a pastor, local leaders cared for the needs of the church. In fact, Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist church has been recognized as one of the few congregations on the island of Oahu that did not need a pastor to operate well. However, since its organization a good number of pastors have helped the congregation to move forward. Some of the pastors that provided leadership and encouragement to the congregation throughout the years were Walter Barber, Richard Among, Balbino Rabanal, Larry Engle, George Munson, Jerry Dale, Dennis Joao, Alele Moaga, and David Madrid. In the summer of 2005 I was assigned by the Hawai'i Conference to pastor Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist Church becoming the youngest pastor in the history of the church.

Two unfortunate events took place almost concurrently that diminished the positive spirit of unity, love, and motivation within the church. In 1989 a fire destroyed the Primary room. Members experienced discouragement during the difficult process of rebuilding the room to comply with new fire-prevention codes.

A second negative event that effected the congregation was an unfortunate misunderstanding between the clergy and church members. As stated previously the church from its inception was very active and united. Not only were they active in evangelism but there was also a very close relationship among the members.

But in 1992 the church was literally divided into two groups. Because of constant conflict, many members moved away to other churches, others left the church for good, and those who remained became discouraged, confused, and agitated. Although the church has made an effort to regain former characteristics of unity and evangelism, which were factors in their growth, it proved to be a difficult challenge. Currently the Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist church has a membership of 156 members. However, the average attendance on Sabbath is 105.

Cultural Background of the Membership

The Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist Church membership has a very rich cultural and ethnic background. Those who attend church on Sabbaths are mostly Filipinos, but also in the mix are native Hawaiians, Samoans, Japanese, Chinese, Caucasians, African Americans, Micronesians, and Hispanics.

At least two elements have contributed to the enrichment of the cultural experience of the Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist church. The first is the presence of military families in the congregation. There are several U.S. military bases on the island of Oahu representing the Marines, Navy, Army, and Air Force. Perhaps one of the most well known is Pearl Harbor. These military bases provide constant movement of people coming to or going from the island.

The second element, which has contributed to the cultural enrichment of the local congregation, has been the presence of tourists from all over the world. Visiting families and friends bring new ideas and different cultural perspectives when they come to fellowship with Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist church. They help to broaden our understanding of their cultures.

Description of Relationships Among Members Before the Seminar

Surveys were distributed before the seminar to assess the relationship dynamics among members of the congregation. *Survey 1* was designed to quantify the interpersonal relationships of the local membership. In addition, it assessed the value that members placed on training in this area. *Survey 1* also focused on respondent's perceptions about the importance of close relationships among members in the context of evangelism. *Survey 2* was designed to evaluate the quality of interpersonal relationships of church members prior to the seminar. It also elicited demographic information about the respondents.

These two surveys were given to all members in attendance during the announcement time before the Worship Service. An explanation was given about the purpose of the study, inclusion criteria, risks, and benefits, and it was emphasized that participation was voluntary. Members were asked to complete and return the surveys anonymously. The participants were instructed to place the surveys in envelopes located at the entrance of the church building. See Appendix B for copies of the questionnaires.

The Participants

The participants were selected based both on age and membership criteria. In order to qualify for the study, participants had to be 20 years of age or older and members in good standing of the Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist church. From the group of 75 in attendance that Sabbath, 36 surveys were returned. This represents a 48% response rate. The following is a report of their responses.

Survey 1

Question 1. “How satisfied are you with the love and care demonstrated by the church members in your congregation?” From the 36 respondents 1 checked “Not Satisfied” (3%), 5 marked “Minimally Satisfied” (14%), 9 checked “Moderately Satisfied” (25%), 16 endorsed “Very Satisfied” (44%), and 5 checked “Totally Satisfied” (14%). See Figure 1 below.

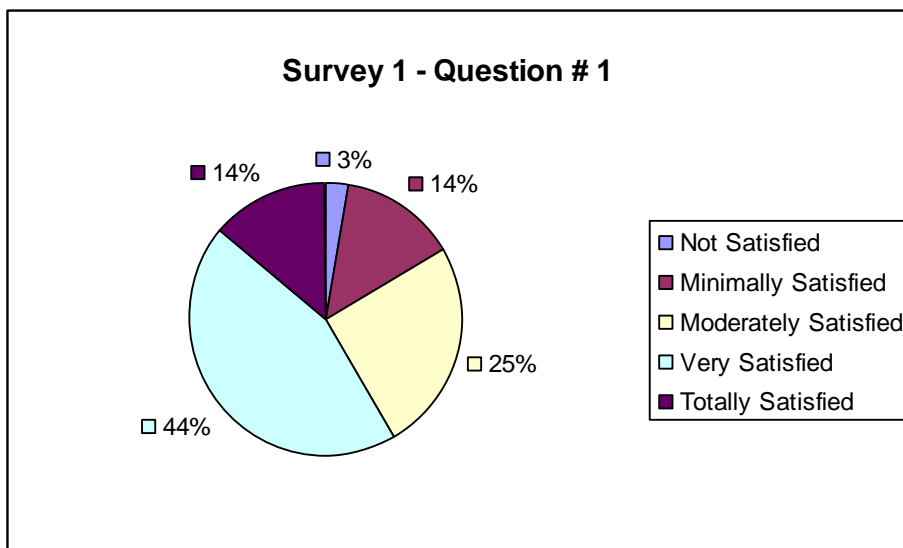


Figure 1. How satisfied are you with the love and care demonstrated by the church members in your congregation?

Question 2. “How important is love and care to the effectiveness of church growth?” Not a single person answered that love and care was “Not Important” to the effectiveness of church growth (0%); 1 person checked “Minimally Important” (3%), and another one marked “Moderately Important” (3%). However, 13 individuals checked “Very Important” (36%) while 20 (55%) endorsed “Totally Important”. One person did not respond to this question (3%). See Figure 2 below.

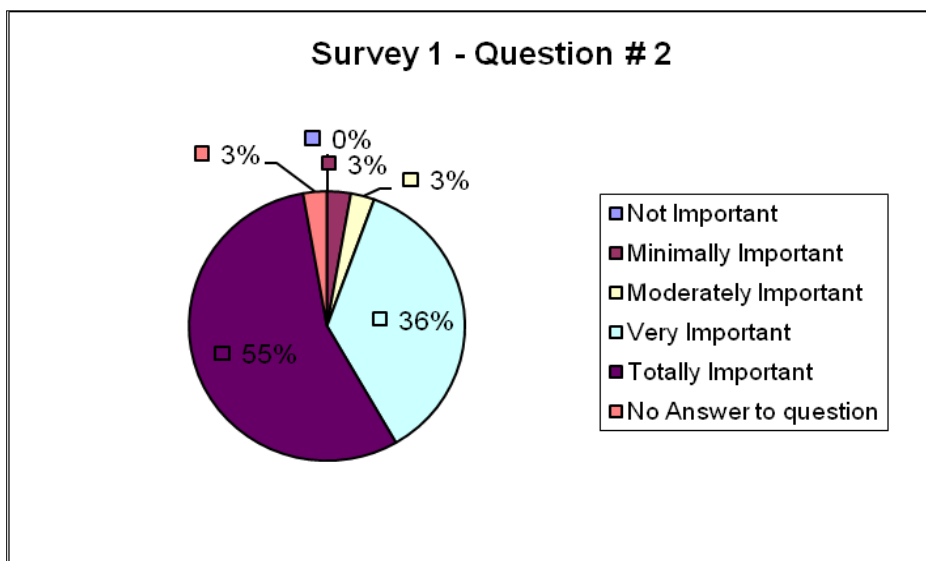


Figure 2. How important is love and care to the effectiveness of church growth?

Question 3. “How often is there interpersonal conflict in your congregation?” One person checked “Never” (3%), 7 marked “Hardly Ever” (19%), 17 checked “Seldom” (47%), 6 marked “Often” (17%), 2 checked “Very Often” (6%) and 3 people did not respond to the question (8%). See Figure 3 on the following page.

Question 4. “How often have you had a seminar or series of sermons on interpersonal relationships in your church?” Nine people responded that the church had

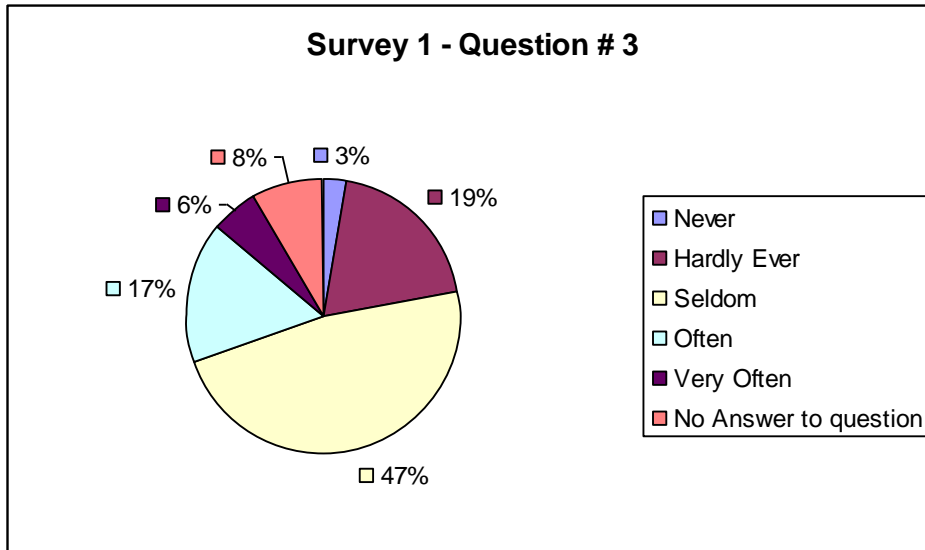


Figure 3. How often is there interpersonal conflict in your congregation?

“Never” had a seminar or series of sermons on interpersonal relationships (25%). Seven checked “Hardly Ever” (19%), 13 marked “Seldom” (36%), and 5 checked “Often” (14%). None of the participants marked “Very Often” (0%) and 2 did not answer this question (6%). See Figure 4 below.

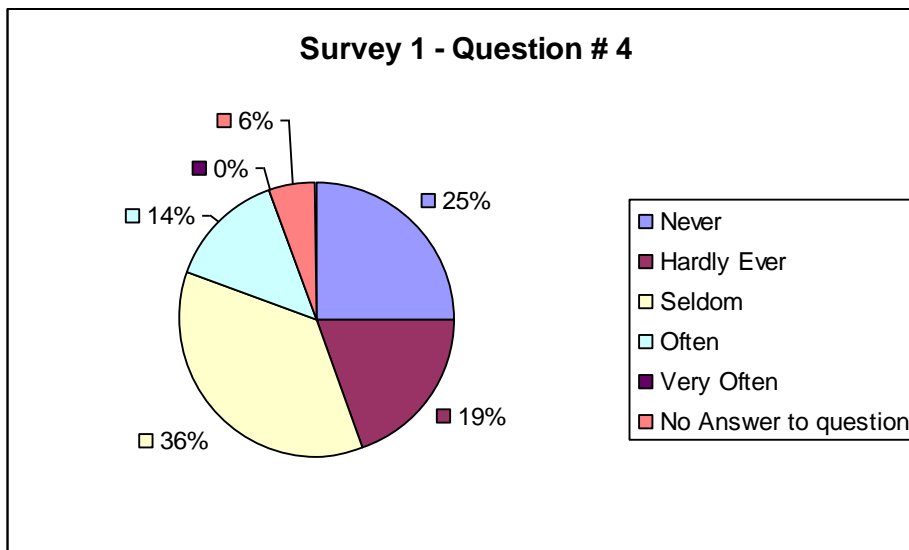


Figure 4. How often have you had a seminar or series of sermons on interpersonal relationships in your church?

Question 5. “How often do you think the church should have a seminar or series of sermons on interpersonal relationships?” No-one indicated that the church should “Never” have a seminar or series of sermons on interpersonal relationships (0%). One individual checked “Hardly Ever” (3%), 23 people marked “Often” (63%), and 4 checked “Very Often” (11%). Six people marked “Seldom” (17%) and 2 did not respond (6%). See Figure 5 below.

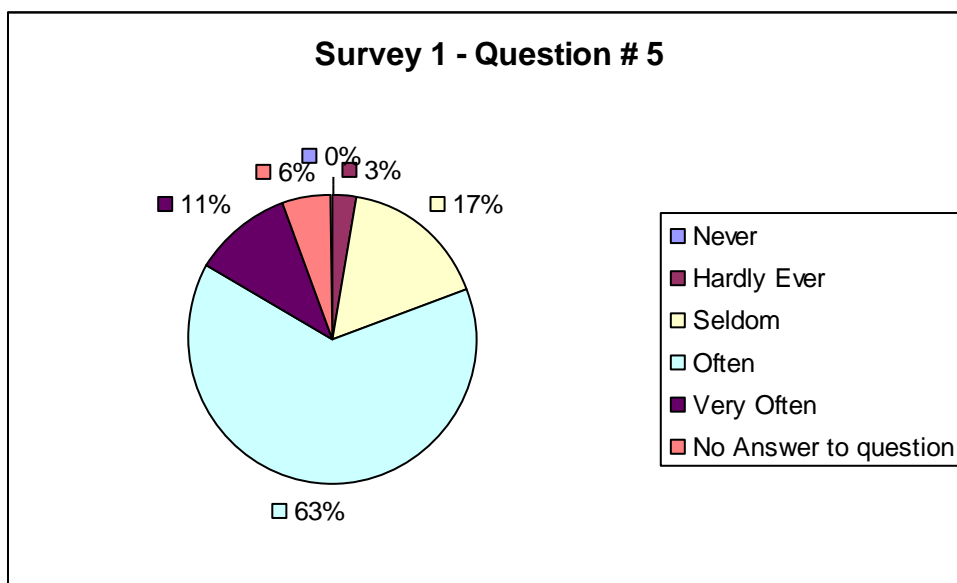


Figure 5. How often do you think the church should have a seminar or series of sermons on interpersonal relationship?

Question 6. “How often do you invite a neighbor, friend, or relative to any of your local church services, socials, or events?” Three out of the 36 answered “Never” (8%), 5 “Hardly Ever” (14%), 16 “Seldom” (44%), 11 “Often” (31%), and no-one answered “Very Often” (0%). One participant did not answer this question (3%). See Figure 6 on the following page.

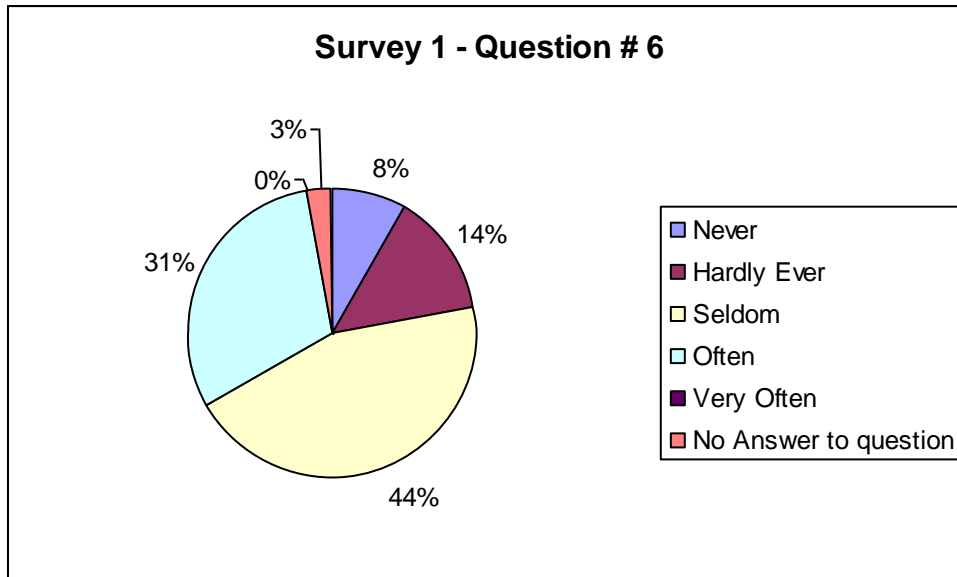


Figure 6. How often do you invite a neighbor, friend, or relative to any of your local church services, socials, or events?

Question 7. “My local church is fulfilling the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ of spreading the Gospel and baptizing people in my own community?” Two people checked “Strongly Disagree” (6%), 7 marked “Disagree” (19%), 11 checked “Mildly Agree” (31%), 13 endorsed “Agree” (36%) and 3 checked “Strongly Agree” (8%). See Figure 7 on the following page.

Question 8. “After a local visitor attends your church for the first time how often does he/she return to any of the church services, socials, and events?” No-one answered “Never” to this question (0%). However, 4 said “Hardly Ever” (11%), 20 “Seldom” (55%), 11 “Often” (31%) and 1 “Very Often” (3%). See Figure 8 on the following page.

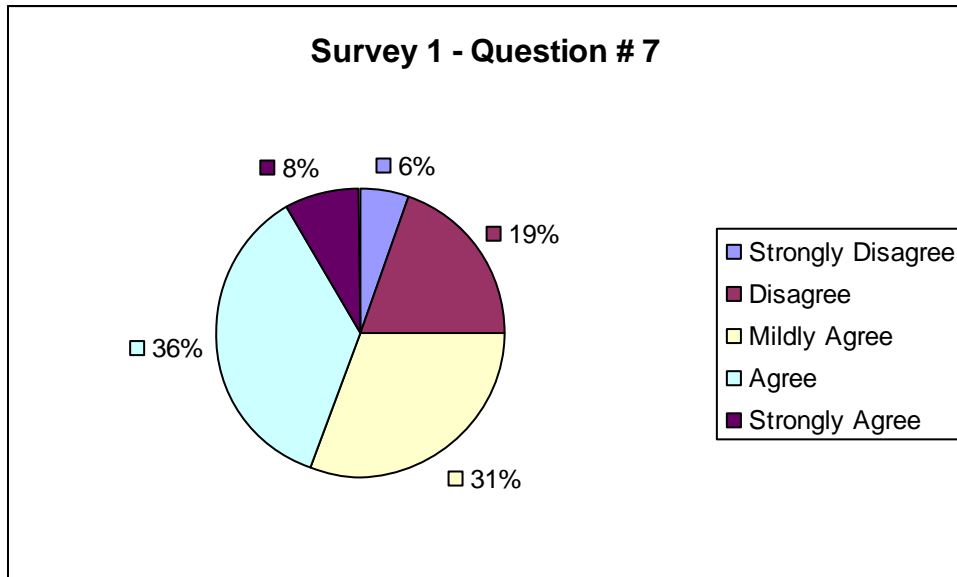


Figure 7. My local church is fulfilling the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ of spreading the gospel and baptizing people in my own community?

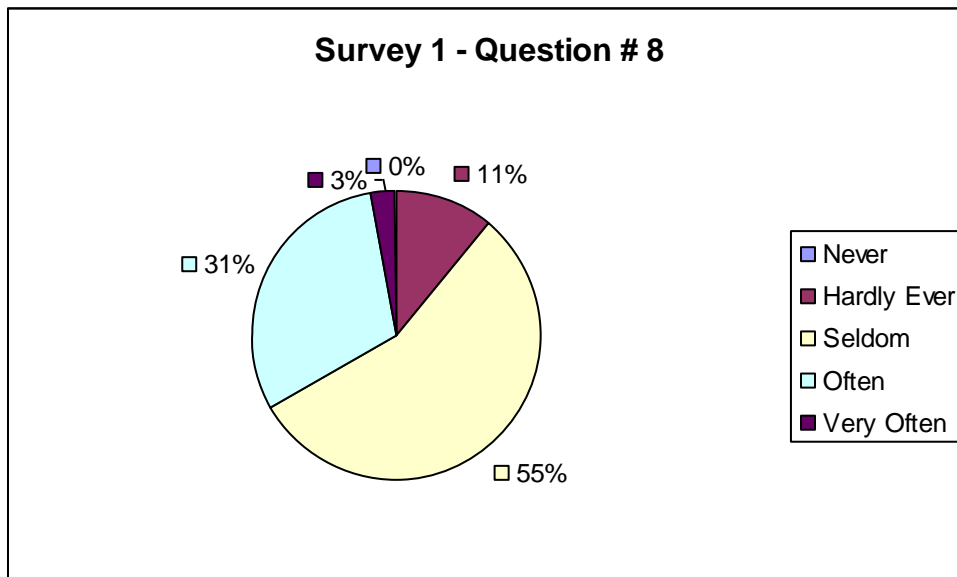


Figure 8. After a local visitor attends your church for the first time how often does he/she return to any of the church services, socials, and events?

Survey 2

Survey 2 is composed of two parts. *Part 1* gathered personal information which included gender, age range, and level of education completed.

Question 1. “Gender.” From the 36 participants 11 were male (31%). The great majority was female with 23 (63%). Two people did not answer this question (6%). See Figure 9 below.

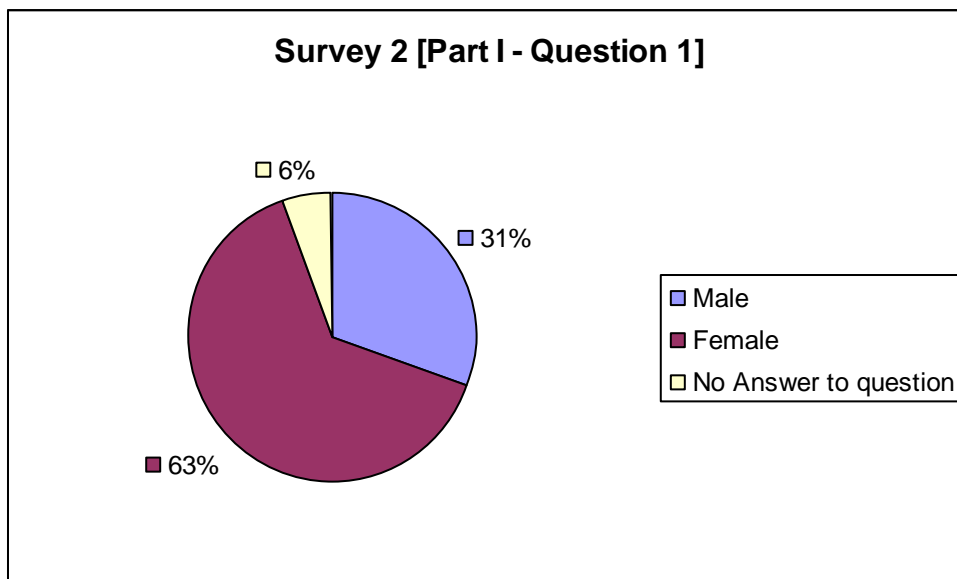


Figure 9. Personal information-gender.

Question 2. “What is your age range?” Three people were in the range of 20-30 years (8%), 4 people were between 31-40 years (11%), 7 people were between 41-50 years (19%), 5 people indicated 51-60 years (14%), 10 people were between 61-70 years (28%), and 6 people said they were 71 or over (17%). One person did not answer this question (3%). See Figure 10 on the following page.

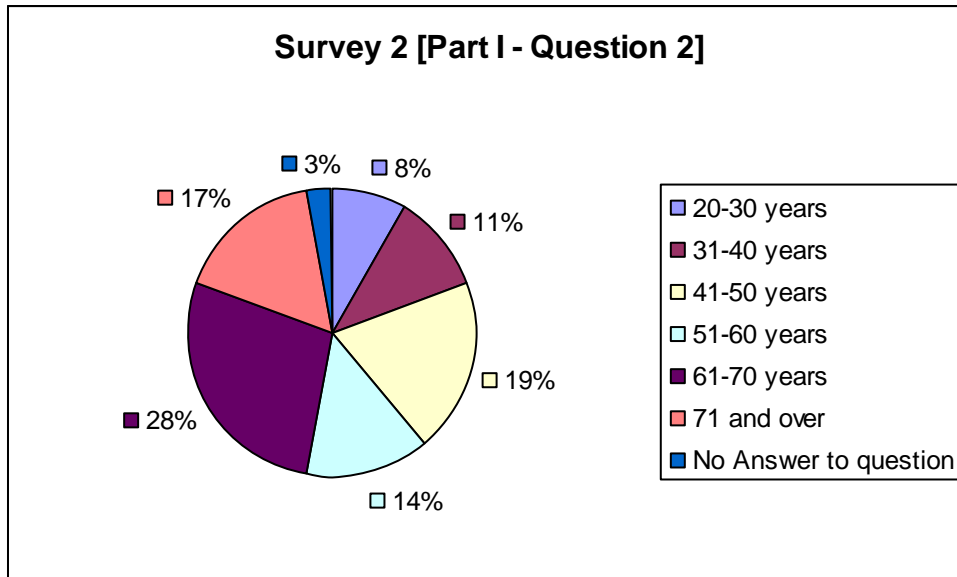


Figure 10. What is your age range?

Question 3. “Indicate your highest level of education completed.” Thirteen people completed High School (36%), 8 had an Associate degree (22%), 9 had a Bachelors degree (25%), and 4 had a Masters degree (11%). None had Doctoral degrees (0%) and 2 did not answer this question (6%). See Figure 11 below.

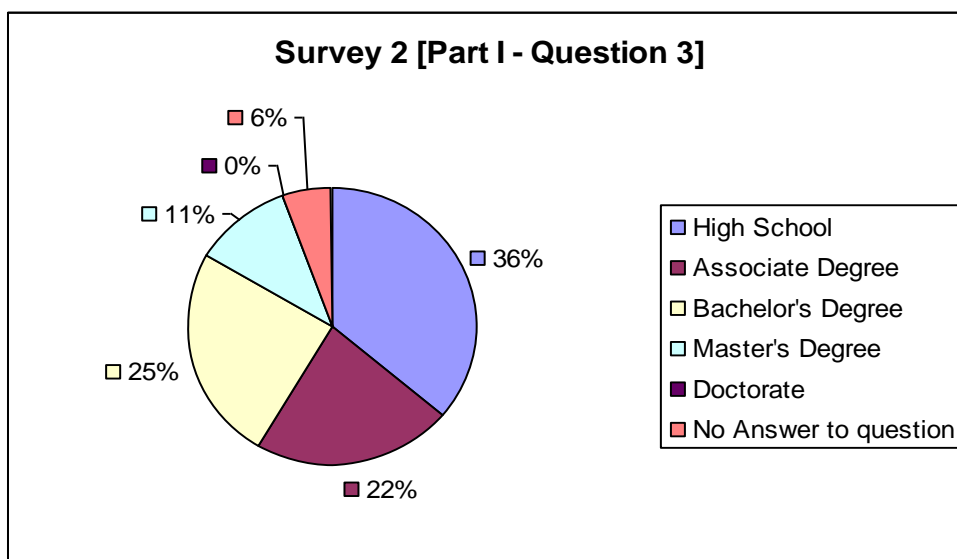


Figure 11. Indicate your highest level of education completed.

Part II was designed to evaluate the interpersonal relationships of church members before the seminar.

Question 1. “When a member of the church or visitor talks to me, I usually listen very carefully to what the person is saying.” No-one endorsed “Strongly Disagree” (0%), 2 people indicated “Disagree” (6%), 5 marked “Neutral” (14%), 13 people checked “Agree” (36%) and the remaining 13 marked “Strongly Agree” (36%). Three people did not answer to this question (8%). See Figure 12 below.

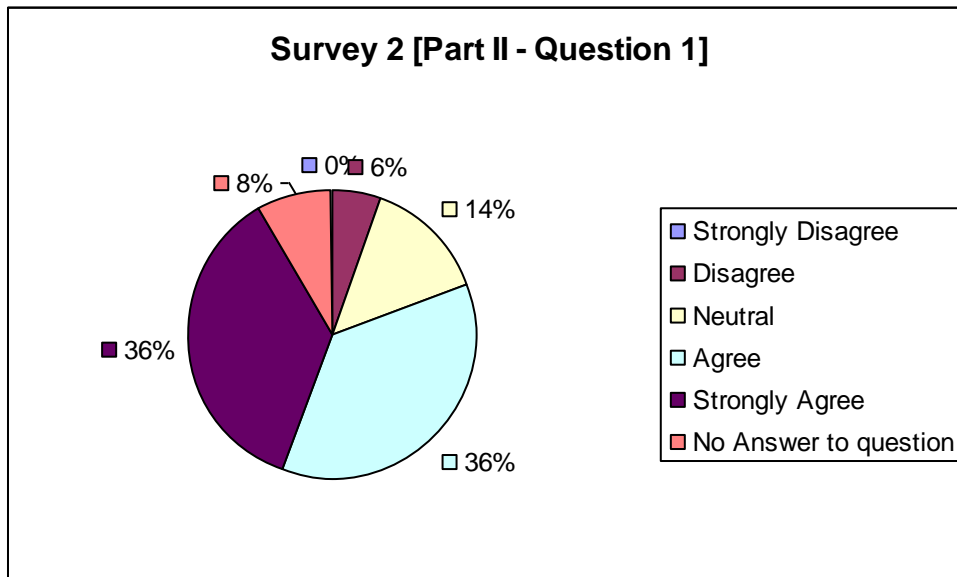


Figure 12. When a member of the church or visitor talks to me, I try to listen very carefully to what the person is saying.

Question 2. “All my attention is given to the person who is talking to me.” Of the 36 participants 1 marked “Strongly Disagree” (3%), 1 checked “Disagree” (3%), 3 marked “Neutral” (8%), 15 checked “Agree” (42%), and 12 endorsed “Strongly Agree” (33%). Four people did not answer this question (11%). See Figure 13 on the following page.

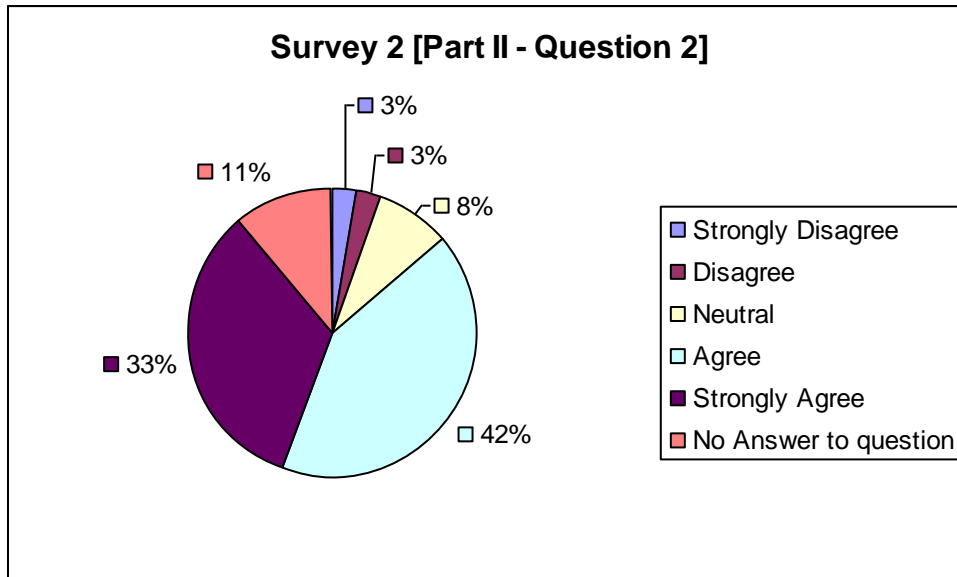


Figure 13. All my attention is given to the person who is talking to me.

Question 3. “When I get to church I greet people regardless if they are members or not.” Two people checked “Strongly Disagree” (6%), 1 marked “Disagree” (3%), 2 checked “Neutral” (6%), 13 marked “Agree” (36%), and 14 checked “Strongly Agree” (38%). Four people did not answer this question (11%). See Figure 14 on the following page.

Question 4. “I have thought of leaving the church because of a problem with a member.” Twenty-one checked “Strongly Disagree” (58%), 6 checked “Disagree” (17%), 4 marked “Neutral” (11%) and 1 checked “Agree” (3%). No-one marked “Strongly Agree” (0%) and 4 people did not to answer to this question (11%). See Figure 15 on the following page.

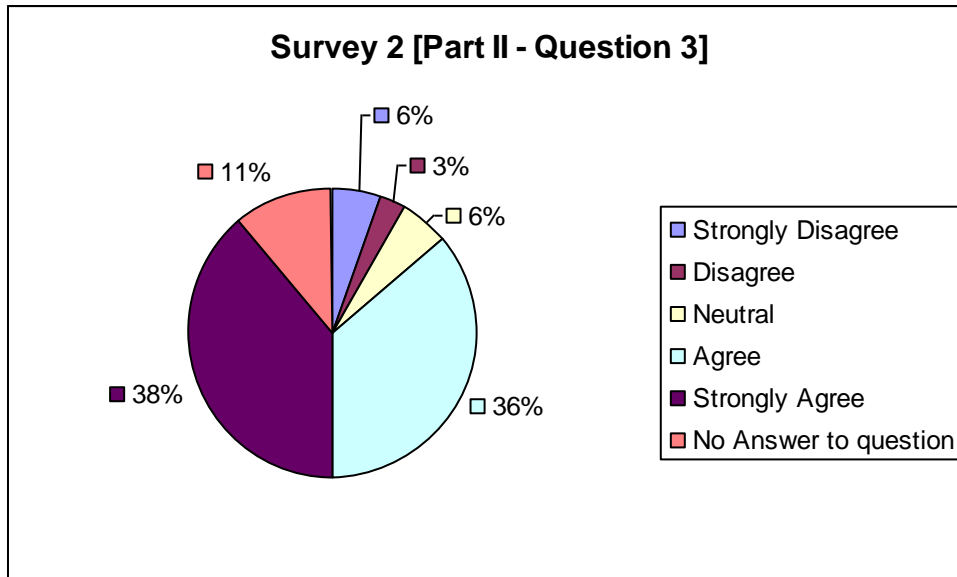


Figure 14. When I get to church I greet people regardless of if they are members or not.

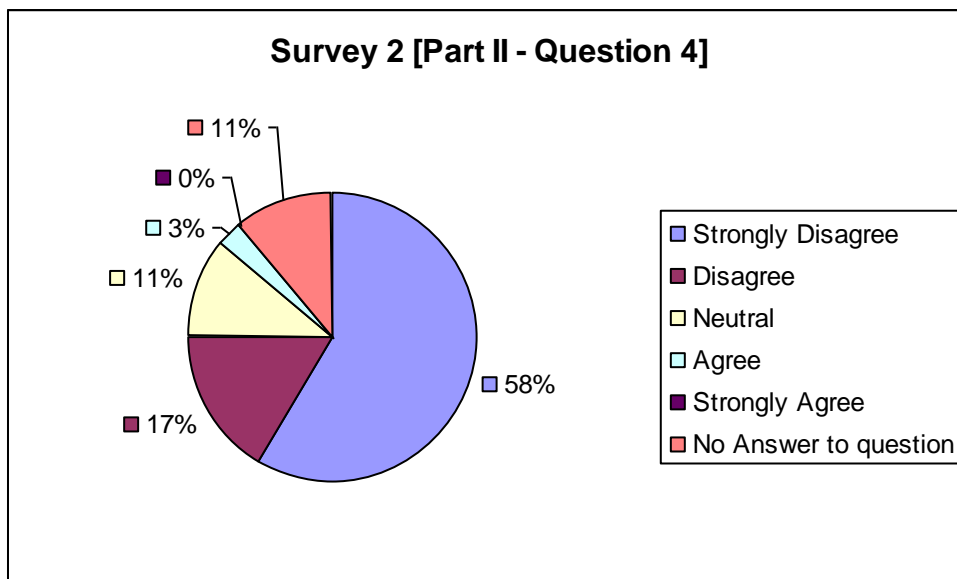


Figure 15. I have thought of leaving the church because of a problem with a member.

Question 5. “When somebody confronts me with a different opinion I get upset easily.” Out of the 36 participants 10 checked “Strongly Disagree” (28%), 11 marked “Disagree” (30%), 8 checked “Neutral” (22%), 2 marked “Agree” (6%), and 1 checked “Strongly Agreed” (3%). Four people did not answer this question (11%). See Figure 16 below.

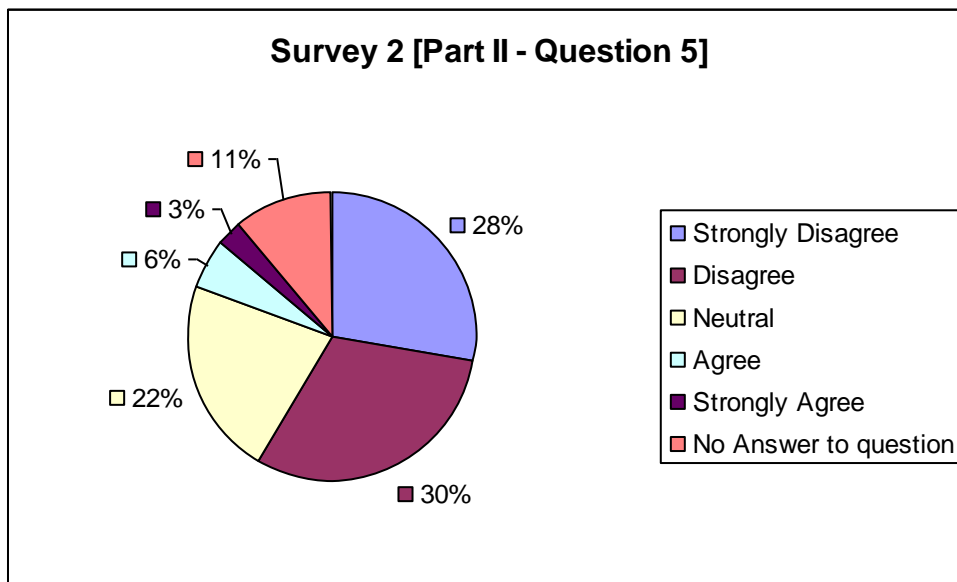


Figure 16. When somebody confronts me with a different opinion I get upset easily.

Question 6. “I often get mad at people.” Sixteen people endorsed “Strongly Disagree” (45%), 9 checked “Disagree” (25%), 4 marked “Neutral” (11%), 3 checked “Agree” (8%) and nobody checked “Strongly Agree” on this question (0%). Four people did not answer this question (11%), fig. 17.

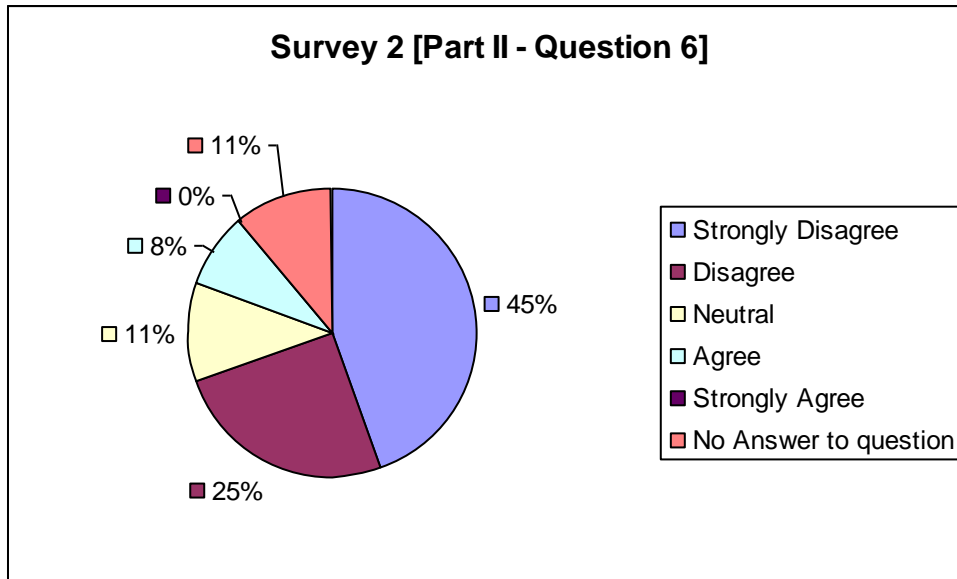


Figure 17. I often get mad at people.

Question 7. “When somebody hurts my feelings is it easy for me to forgive.”

Three people marked “Strongly Disagree” (8%), 2 checked “Disagree” (6%), 6 marked “Neutral” (17%), 10 endorsed “Agree” (28%), and 12 checked “Strongly Agree” (33%). Three people did not answer this question (8%). See Figure 18 on the following page.

Question 8. “I think that loving one another is a very crucial issue to fulfill our mission as a church.” Out of the 36 participants 2 checked “Strongly Disagree” (6%), 1 marked “Disagree” (3%), no one checked “Neutral” (0%), 3 marked “Agree” (8%), and 26 endorsed “Strongly Agree” (72%). Four people did not answer this question (11%). See Figure 19 on the following page.

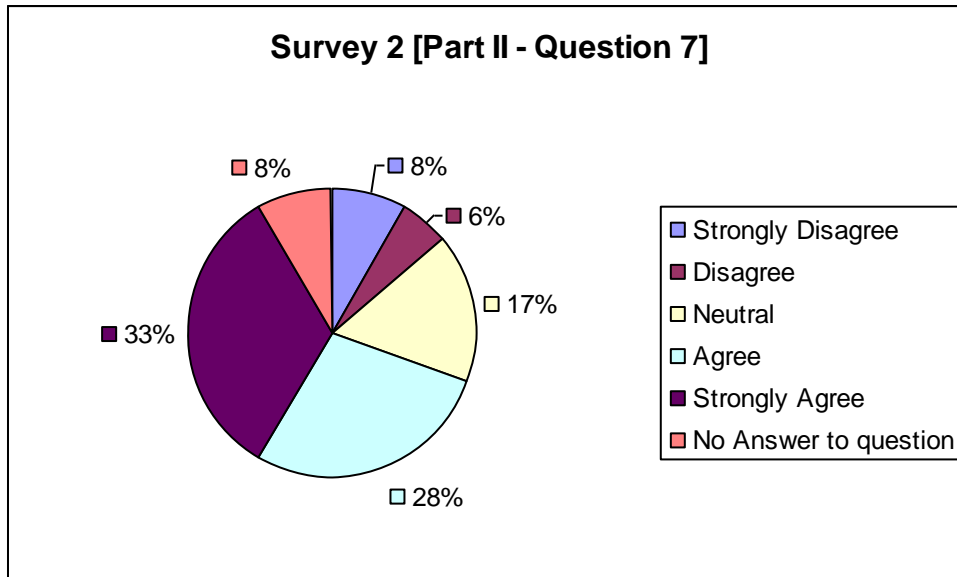


Figure 18. When somebody hurts my feelings it is easy for me to forgive.

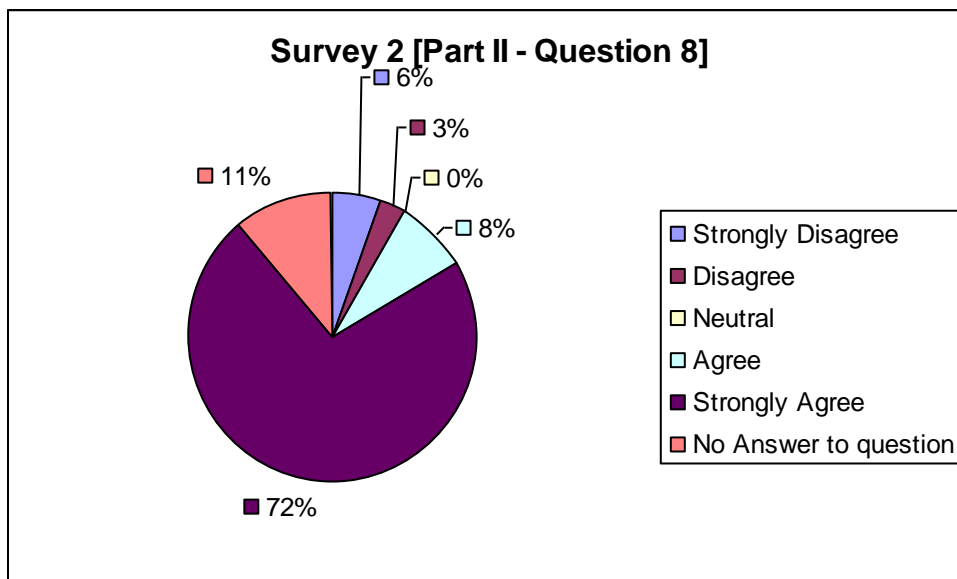


Figure 19. I think that loving one another is a very crucial issue to fulfill our mission as church.

Question 9. “I would rather attend a prophecy seminar instead of an interpersonal relationship seminar.” Three checked “Strongly Disagree” (8%), 9 marked “Disagree” (25%), 14 checked “Neutral” (40%), 4 marked “Agree” (11%), and 3 endorsed “Strongly agree” (8%). Three people did not answer this question (8%). See Figure 20 below.

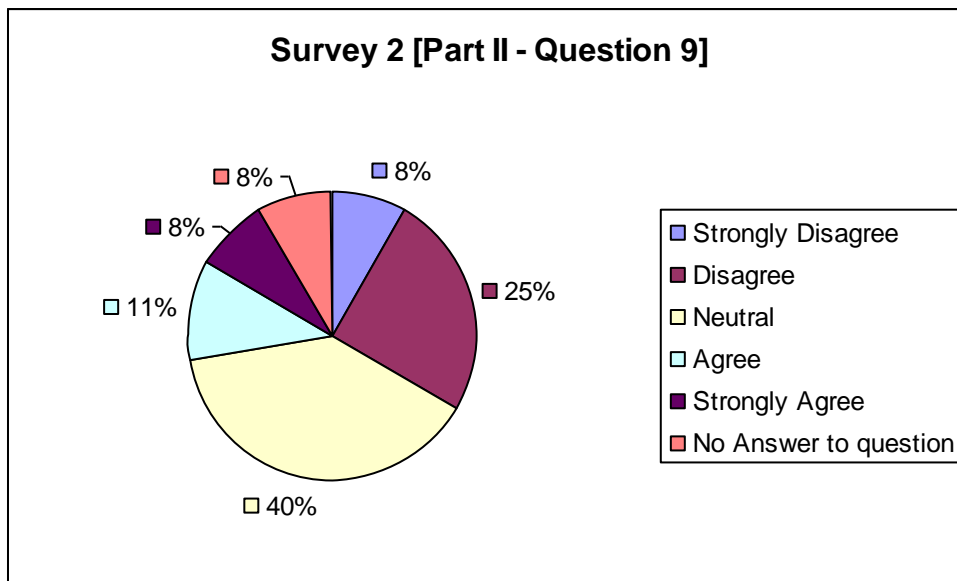


Figure 20. I think it is important to attend to a seminar on interpersonal relationships.

Question 10. “I consider my congregation as a really friendly church.” Two people marked “Strongly Disagree” (6%), no one checked “Disagree” (0%), 5 people marked “Neutral” (14%), 15 checked “Agree” (41%), and 11 endorsed “Strongly Agree” (31%). Three people did not answer this question (8%). See Figure 21 on the following page.

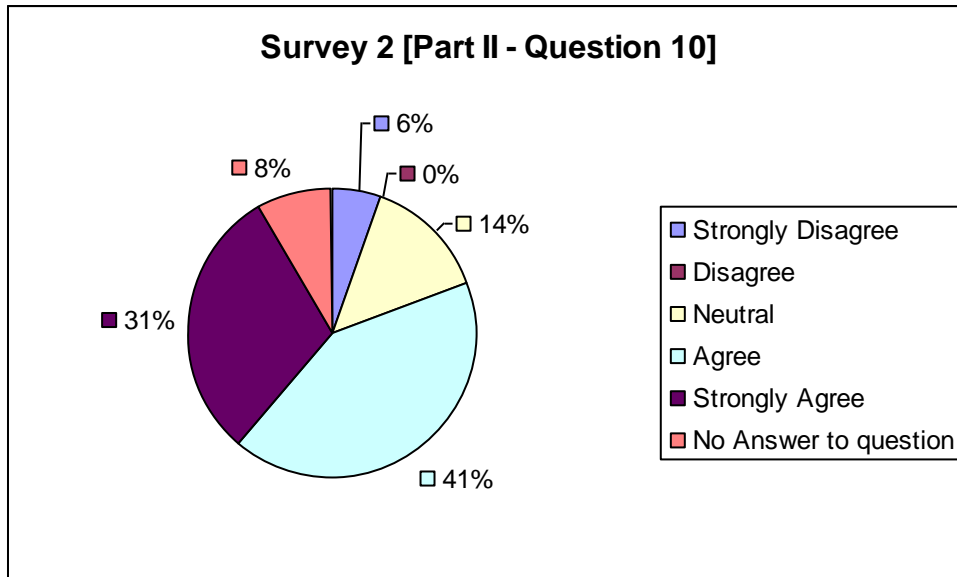


Figure 21. I consider my congregation as a really friendly church.

In summary, Survey 1 results indicate that

1. More than half of the respondents (58%) feel “Very Satisfied” or “Totally Satisfied” with the love and care they experience within the congregation while 17% indicated that they were “Not Satisfied” or “Minimally Satisfied”.
2. The respondents mostly agreed that love and care are “Very Important” (36%) or “Totally Important” (55%) for church growth.
3. Twenty-three percent of respondents reported that “Often” or “Very Often,” there is conflict in the church.
4. Twenty-five percent of the respondents indicated that the church has “Never” had seminars on interpersonal relationships and 19% reported that the church has “Very Often” had seminars on interpersonal relationships.
5. Most of the respondents (74%) thought the church should have seminars on interpersonal relationships “Often” or “Very Often”.

6. Close to half of the respondents (44%) “Seldom” invite friends to events at church and 31% “Often” do so.

7. Fewer than half of respondents (44%) endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that the local church is fulfilling the Great Commission.

8. More than half of the respondents reported that first-time visitors “Seldom” return to church (55%) and 11% indicated that first time visitors “Hardly Ever” return to church.

Survey 2-Part I results indicate that

1. More women (63%) than men answered the survey.
2. Almost half of the respondents (45%) were 61 years or older.
3. About a third (36%) of respondents had a high school education and 22% had an associate’s degree.

Survey 2- Part II responses indicate that

1. About a third of the respondents (36%) endorsed “Agree”, i.e., that they try very hard to listen carefully to others, and 36% endorsed “Strongly Agree”, i.e., that they try very hard to do so.

2. Forty-two percent of the respondents endorsed “Agree”, i.e., that they give all their attention to the person that is talking, and 33% endorsed “Strongly Agree”, i.e., that they did so.

3. About a third of respondents (36%) endorsed “Agree”, i.e., that they greet everyone at church regardless if the individual is a member or not, and 38% endorsed “Strongly Agree”, i.e., that they did so.

4. Only 3% of respondents endorsed “Agree”, i.e., that they have thought of leaving the church because of problems with another member.
5. About 6% of respondents endorsed “Agree” and 3% endorsed “Strongly Agree”, i.e., that they get upset easily when somebody confronts them with a different opinion.
6. About 8% of respondents endorsed “Agree”, i.e., that they often get mad at people.
7. About 6% of respondents “disagreed” and 8% endorsed “Strongly Agree”, i.e., that it is easy to forgive when someone hurts their feelings.
8. Six percent of respondents endorsed “Strongly Disagree” and 3% endorsed “Disagreed”, i.e., that loving one another is very crucial for our mission as a church.
9. Eight percent of respondents endorsed “Strongly Disagree” and 25% endorsed “Disagreed”, i.e., that it is important to attend a seminar on interpersonal relationships.
10. Six percent of respondents endorsed “Strongly Disagreed”, i.e., that their congregation was a friendly one.

Summary

Captain James Cook arrived on Hawai’i’s shore in January 1778. Several years later king Kamehameha I became the first king of the united kingdom of the Hawaiian Islands. The United States recognized the Republic of Hawai’i in 1864. It became an official U.S. territory in 1900 and the 50th state of the American Union in 1959. The rich cultural diversity of Hawai’i can be traced back to Cook’s discovery of the islands. Explores and traders mainly from Europe became frequent visitors. Later on, Chinese, Portuguese, Puerto Ricans, Polynesians, and Micronesians were brought in as laborers in

the pineapple and sugarcane plantations. Since the beginning of the twentieth century Asian people such as Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos began to immigrate to the islands. This phenomenon not only contributed to an extended mixture of culture and diversity but also to a significant increase in tourism which became the main source of income for Hawai'i.

The birth of the Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist church began sixty years ago when some members from the Central Honolulu Seventh-day Adventist Church took the initiative to plant a new congregation in the Waipahu-Ewa area of the island. In 1950 the Hawai'i Mission of Seventh-day Adventists recognized them as a Company with a membership of 24 charter members. After several years of hard work they purchased a property on Awanaii Street where the church building is still located. Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist Church was well known across the sisterhood of churches for being very active in evangelism and outreach and for its strong leadership.

Today those who attend church on Sabbaths, are mostly Filipinos, but also included are native Hawaiians, Samoans, Japanese, Chinese, Caucasians, African Americans, Micronesians, and Hispanics. Two main factors have contributed to the enrichment of the cultural experience of the Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist church. The first is the presence of military families in the congregation and the presence of tourists from all over the world.

An effort was made, by the use of questionnaires, to find out what members of the Waipahu Church thought about the state of interpersonal relationships within the congregation. From the responses to the 36 surveys that were returned, it was clear that

there were both strengths and weaknesses observable in the relationship dynamics of the members.

More than half of the respondents were satisfied with the love and care they receive in the congregation, but 17% were unsatisfied.

Almost a quarter of the respondents indicated that there was conflict among members of the congregation.

While about three-quarters of the members occasionally invite guests to church, these visitors rarely or never come back again.

While a fair number of the respondents practiced good communication skills there were quite a few who didn't, and a number of the respondents reported becoming easily upset or angry as they interacted with others at church.

The results of the survey showed that there was room for improvement in the interpersonal relationships of members in the church. The seminar that is described in the next chapter was designed to address these issues.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE SEMINAR

Presentation of the Seminar

The seminar was presented at Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist Church in Waipahu, the island of Oahu, Hawai'i. It was presented as a twelve-session series, which took place April 1-25, 2009. The lectures were given on Wednesday and Friday nights and Sabbath mornings. An average of 35 people attended the sessions.

The seminar was presented in an informal manner and was dynamic in the sense that ample opportunity was given to the audience for group discussion, questions, and expression of ideas. Each presentation lasted one hour. Study guides were prepared and distributed at each session. Participants used the study guides to follow the lecture. They filled in the blanks and were encouraged to discuss, review, and develop the concepts in the privacy of their homes.

The objective of the training was for the congregation to consider the importance of strong relationships in all areas of life, and specifically in the area of evangelism. The content presented at the seminar was largely from chapters 2 and 3 of the dissertation and from the survey results. The sessions were as follows:

Session 1 - Wednesday April 1st: Good Relationships in Current Literature.

Session 2 - Friday April 3rd: Good Relationships in the Bible: Old Testament.

Session 3 - Sabbath April 4th: Good Relationships in the Bible: New Testament.

Session 4 - Wednesday April 8th: Good Relationships in Ellen White's writings.

Session 5 - Friday April 10th: Good Relationships and Spirituality and Evangelism.

Session 6 - Sabbath April 11th: Good Relationships and the Postmodern Generation-Receiving Others Into Our Ohana.

Session 7 - Wednesday April 15th: Good Relationships: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Local Church.

Session 8 - Friday April 17th: Learning Interpersonal Skills: Communication.

Session 9 - Sabbath April 18th: Criticism and Interacting With Others.

Session 10 - Wednesday April 22nd: Conflict and Confrontation.

Session 11 - Friday April 24th: Forgiveness I.

Session 12 - Sabbath April 25th: Forgiveness II.

Evaluation of the Seminar

At the conclusion of the seminar, during the last session, two surveys were distributed to 21 people. Before distributing these two surveys (Survey 3 and Survey 4) a brief review of the purpose of the study was given along with information about inclusion criteria, risk, and voluntary participation. Participants were once again directed to place the surveys in envelopes located at the entrance of the church in order to keep the process anonymous. Survey 3 sought to evaluate interpersonal relationships of church members considering the information they studied during the seminar. Survey 4 was limited to the seminar itself and asked participants to evaluate the quality of both the presenter and the presentation.

The Participants

As in the two previous surveys, participants were selected based on age and membership criteria, and also on attendance at a minimum of 6 out of the 12 sessions. Twenty-one individuals responded and returned the surveys. The following is a report of their responses.

Survey Results

Survey 3

Question 1. “When a member of the church or visitor talks to me, I try to listen very carefully to what the person was saying.” No-one endorsed “Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree”, or “Neutral” (0%), 7 people checked “Agree” (33%), and the other 14 indicated “Strongly Agree” (67%). It appears that all respondents to this item are practicing the skill of active listening. See Figure 22 below.

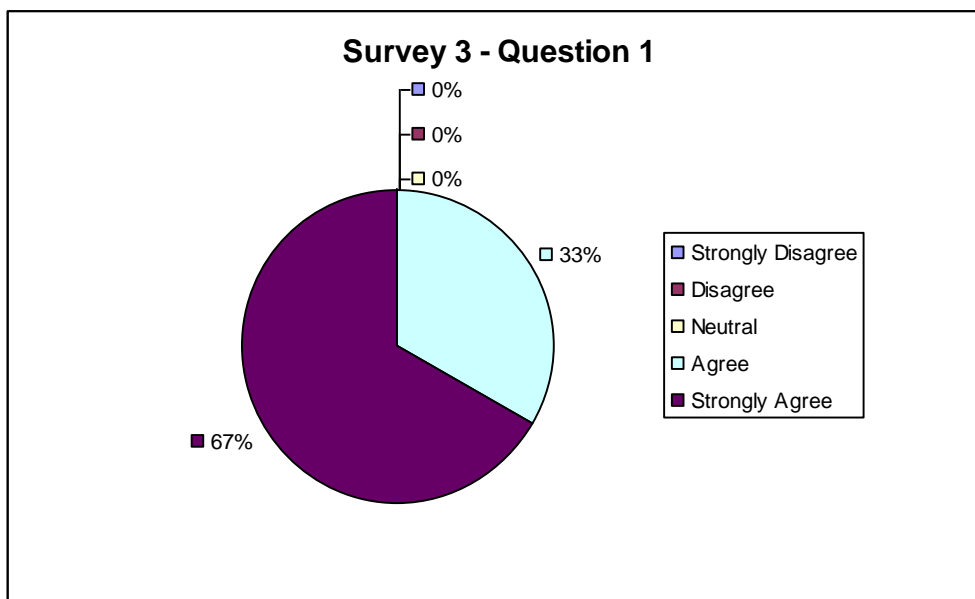


Figure 22. When a member of the church or visitor talks to me, I try to listen very carefully to what the person is saying.

Question 2. “All my attention is given to the person who is talking to me.” Of the 21 participants no-one marked “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree” to this question (0%). However, 1 checked “Neutral” (5%), 6 marked “Agree” (29%), and 14 checked “Strongly Agree” (66%). See Figure 23 below.

With one exception, all the respondents indicate that they give full attention to the person who is talking to them. Attending and listening skills appear to be practiced by these individuals.

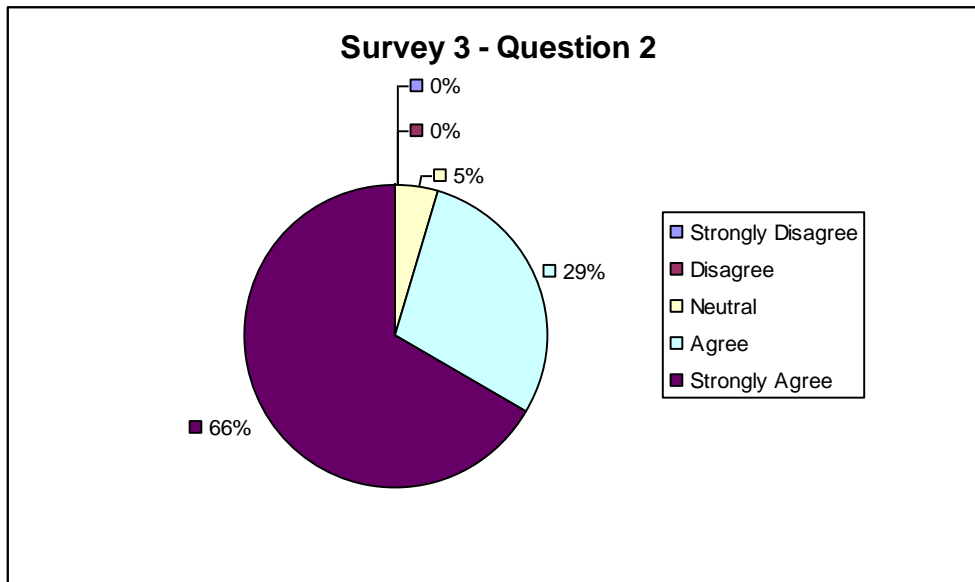


Figure 23. All my attention is given to the person who is talking to me.

Question 3. “When I get to church I greet people regardless if they are members or not.” One person endorsed “Strongly Disagree” (5%), nobody marked “Disagree” (0%), 2 indicated “Neutral” (10%), 5 marked “Agree” (24%), and 13 checked “Strongly Agree” (61%). See Figure 24 on the following page. Of the 21 respondents, 18 indicated that they greet members and guests. Three of the 21 likely did not do so.

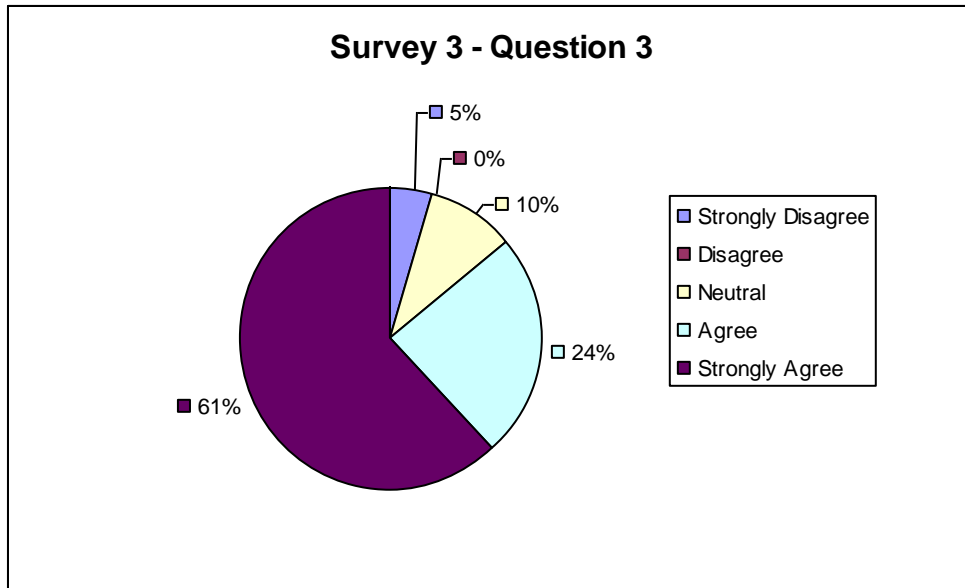


Figure 24. When I get to church I greet people regardless if they are members or not.

Question 4. “I have thought of leaving the church because of a problem with a member.” Fourteen checked “Strongly Disagree” (66%), 3 marked “Disagree” (14%), 2 checked “Neutral” (10%), no-one marked “Agree” (0%), and 1 indicated “Strongly Agree” (5%). One person did not answer this question (5%), fig. 25.

Seventeen of 21 respondents indicated that they had not considered leaving the church because of a problem with a church member, but it is a matter of pastoral concern that 4 individuals had considered, or may have considered doing so.

Question 5. “When somebody confronts me with a different opinion I get upset easily.” Of the 21 participants 7 endorsed “Strongly Disagree” (33%), 11 selected “Disagree” (53%), 3 marked “Neutral” (14%), and no-one endorsed “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” (0%). See Figure 26 on the following page.

Eighteen of 21 respondents indicated that they did not get upset when confronted with a different opinion, but 3 individuals gave a “Neutral” response.

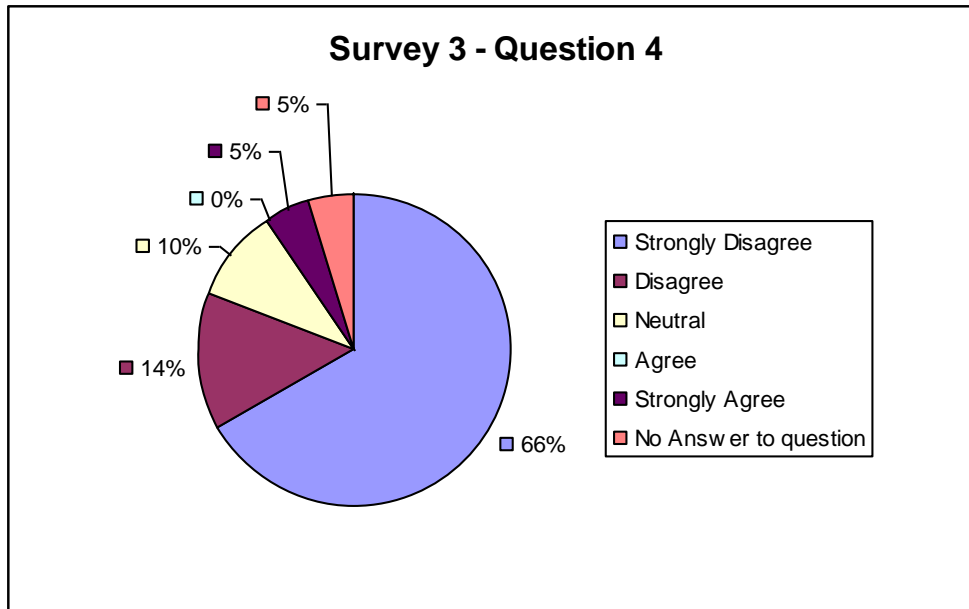


Figure 25. I have thought of leaving the church because of a problem with a member.

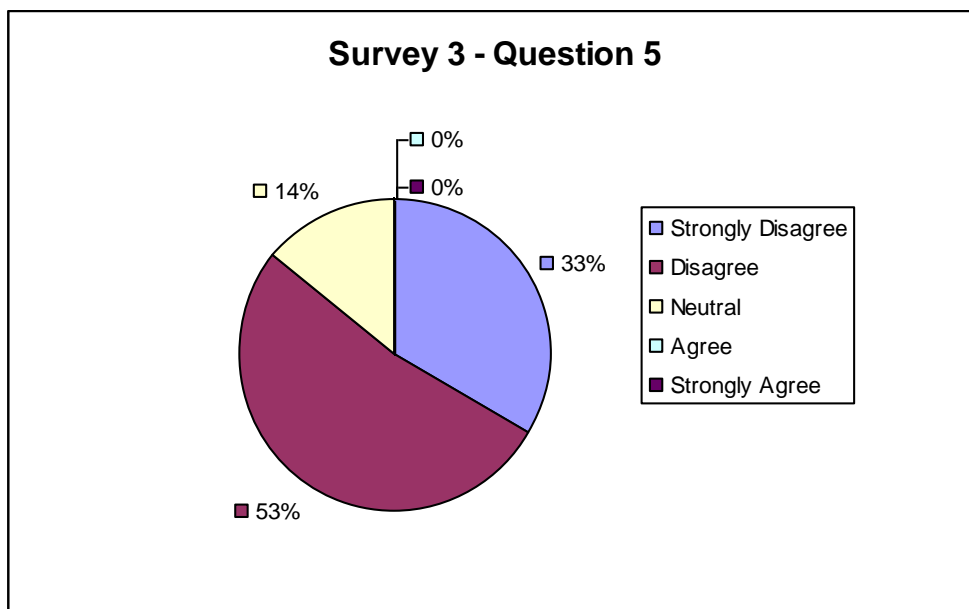


Figure 26. When somebody confronts me with a different opinion I get upset easily.

Question 6. "I often get mad at people." Eleven people endorsed "Strongly Disagree" (52%), 8 checked "Disagree" (38%), 1 marked "Neutral" (5%), no-one

endorsed “Agree” (0%), and one person marked “Strongly Agree” (5%). See Figure 27 on the following page.

Nineteen of 21 respondents indicated that they do not frequently get mad/angry at people, but it is a matter of pastoral concern that 1 person strongly endorsed this item, and that another individual may also have had some difficulties with anger.

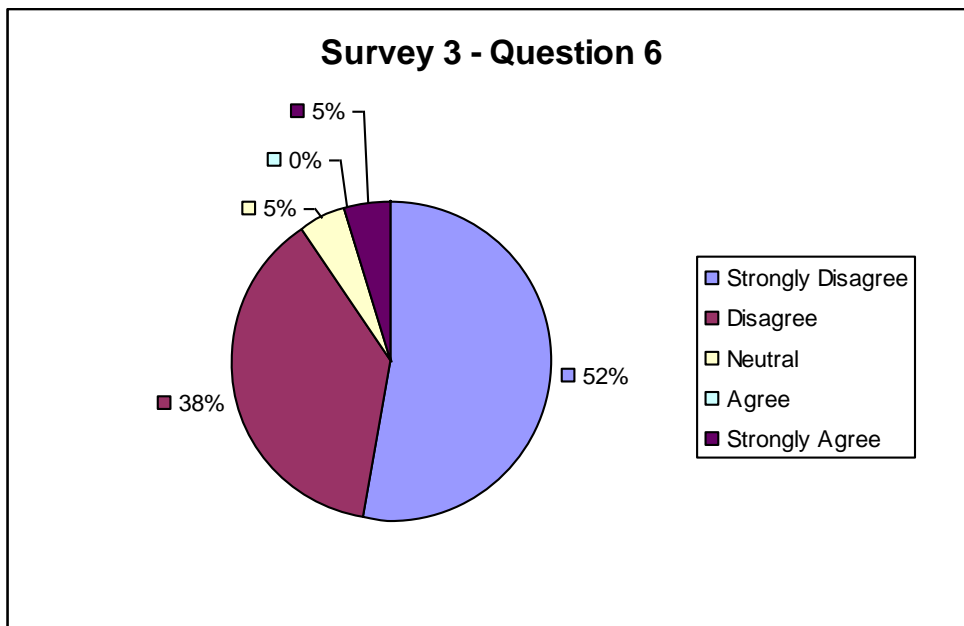


Figure 27. I often get mad at people.

Question 7. “When somebody hurts my feelings it is easy for me to forgive.” One person marked “Strongly Disagree” (5%), no-one endorsed “Disagree” (0%), 6 marked “Neutral” (29%), 5 indicated “Agree” (24%), and 9 checked “Strongly Agree” (42%). See Figure 28 on the following page.

Only 14 of 21 respondents indicated that it is easy for them to forgive when someone hurts their feelings. A third of the group seemed unable to endorse this item,

and one individual strongly disagreed with the statement. This is a matter of pastoral concern.

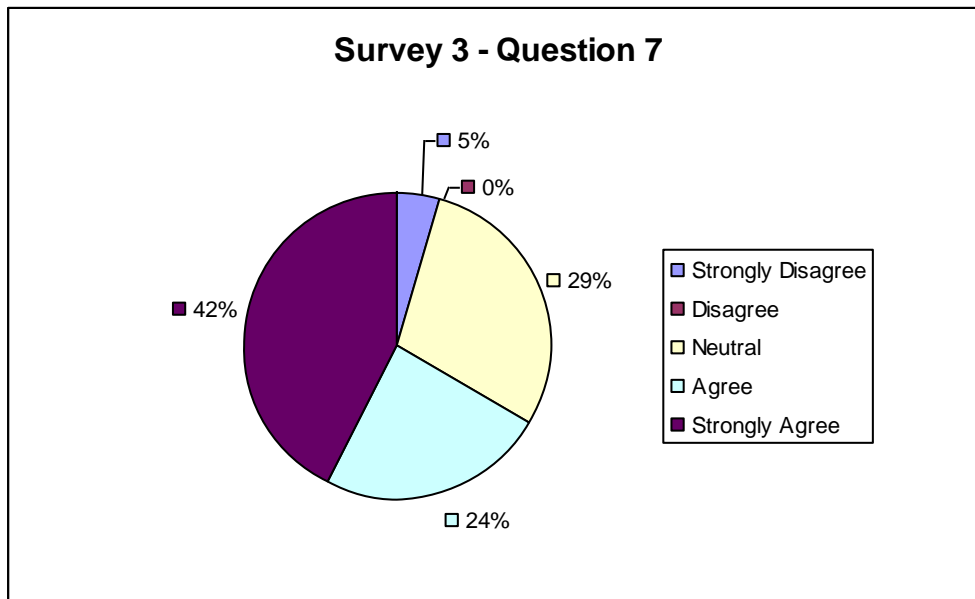


Figure 28. When somebody hurts my feelings it is easy for me to forgive.

Question 8. “I think that loving one another is a very crucial issue to fulfill our mission as church.” One respondent endorsed “Strongly Disagree” (5%), no-one endorsed “Disagree” (0%), 1 person marked “Neutral” (5%), 2 checked “Agree” (10%), and 17 endorsed “Strongly Agree” (80%). See Figure 29 on the following page.

Nineteen of 21 respondents agreed that love manifested toward fellow members is important to the mission of the church while one person strongly disagreed and one checked “Neutral”.

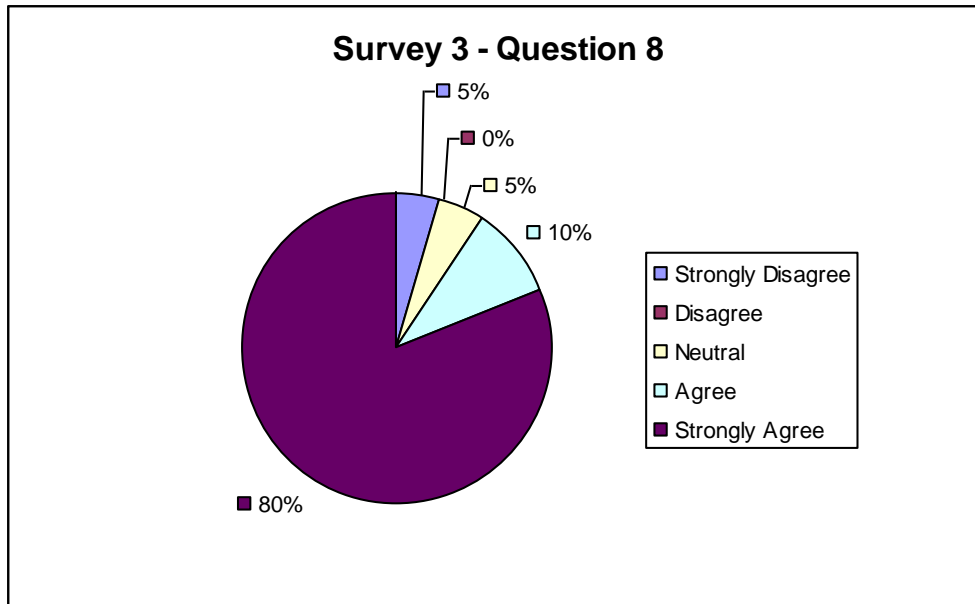


Figure 29. I think that loving one another is a very crucial issue to fulfill our mission as church.

Question 9. “I think it is important attend to a seminar on interpersonal relationships.” No-one endorsed “Strongly Disagree” (0%) or “Disagree” (0%), one checked “Neutral” (5%), 7 marked “Agree” (33%), and 13 endorsed “Strongly Agree” (62%). See Figure 30 on the following page.

Twenty of 21 agreed that attendance at a seminar on interpersonal relationships was important, and 1 individual checked “Neutral”.

Question 10. “I consider my congregation as a really friendly church.” No-one endorsed “Strongly Disagree” (0%), 1 person marked “Disagree” (5%), 3 people indicated “Neutral” (14%), 12 marked “Agree” (57%), and 5 endorsed “Strongly Agree” (24%). See Figure 31 on the following page.

Seventeen of 21 respondents agreed that their congregation was a really friendly church while 1 person disagreed and 3 checked “Neutral”.

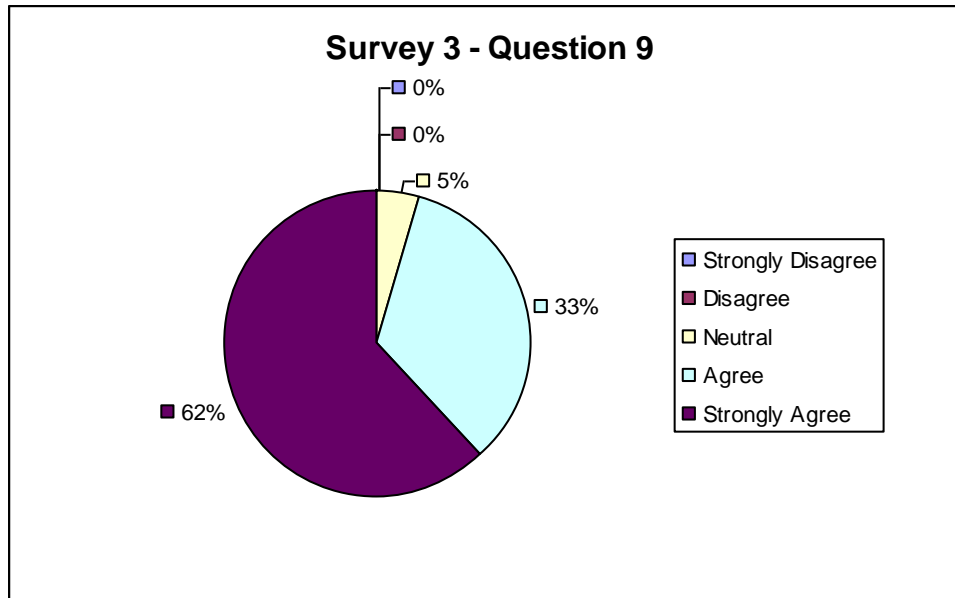


Figure 30. I think it is important to attend to a seminar on interpersonal relationships.

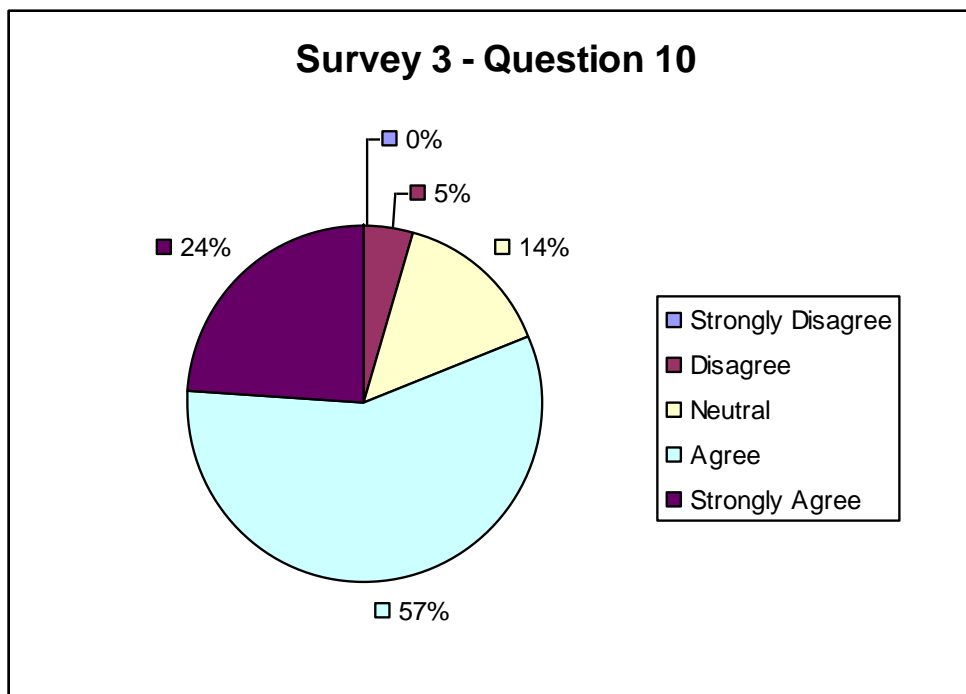


Figure 31. I consider my congregation as a really friendly church.

In summary, most of the responses were given in the positive, and expected direction to the items on this survey. It appears that one respondent gave consistently negative responses which may possibly reflect a contrarian attitude or a need for further improvement in social attitudes and behaviors.

Survey 4

The fourth survey was designed to gain information about the seminar itself. This survey was divided into three sections. The first section focused on the presenter and included his preparation, presentation, and use of multimedia. In the second section the emphasis was on the organization, quality, and relevancy of the content and on the printed materials. The third, and last, section was on the environment in the venue, including temperature, sound, and seating.

The participants were asked to circle the classification that most accurately described the quality of both the presenter and the presentation using the following scale: 1 (Very poor), 2 (Poor), 3 (Good), 4 (Very Good), and 5 (Excellent).

When the participants were asked to evaluate the “Preparation” of the presenter, no-one endorsed “Very Poor” or “Poor” (0%), 2 people indicated “Good” (10%), 2 people checked “Very Good” (10%), and 16 checked “Excellent” (75%). One person did not answer this question (5%).

In summary, all but one of the respondents indicated that the “Preparation” made by the presenter was in the “Good” to “Excellent” range.

Dealing with the over-all “Presentation” of the sessions the following results were obtained. Of the 21 participants no-one checked “Very Poor” or “Poor” (0%), 2 people

marked “Good” (10%), no-one checked “Very Good” (0%), and 18 endorsed “Excellent” (85%). One person did not answer this question (5%).

In summary, all but one of the respondents indicated that the “Presentation” during the seminar was in the “Good” to “Excellent” range.

On the quality of the “Use of Media” no-one checked “Very Poor” or “Poor” (0%), 4 people marked “Good ” (19%), 1 checked “Very Good” (5%), and 15 marked “Excellent” (71%). One person did not answer this question (5%).

In summary, all but one of the respondents indicated that the “Use of Media” was in the “Good” to “Excellent” range.

When the participants were asked to evaluate the “Organization” of the seminar no-one checked “Very Poor” or “Poor” (0%), 1 person marked “Good” (5%), and 2 checked “Very Good” (10%). Seventeen people endorsed “Excellent” (80%) and 1 person did not answer this question (5%).

In summary, all but one of the respondents indicated that the “Organization” of the seminar was in the “Good” to “Excellent” range.

On the overall “Quality” of the seminar no-one checked “Very Poor” or “Poor” (0%), 1 person marked “Good” (5%), 2 checked “Very Good” (10%), and 17 people marked “Excellent” (80%). One person did not answer this question (5%).

In summary, all but one of the respondents indicated that the “Quality” of the seminar was in the “Good” to “Excellent” range.

When the participants were asked to evaluate the “Relevancy” of the seminar no-one endorsed “Very Poor” or “Poor” (0%), 1 checked “Good” (5%), 3 marked “Very

Good” (14%), and 16 people endorsed “Excellent” (76%). One person did not answer this question (5%).

In summary, all but one of the respondents indicated that the “Relevancy” of the seminar was in the “Good” to “Excellent” range.

Regarding the quality of the “Printed Material” of the seminar no-one checked “Very Poor” or “Poor” (0%), 1 marked “Good” (5%), 2 checked “Very Good” (10%), and 17 people endorsed “Excellent” (80%). One person did not answer this question (5%).

In summary, all but one of the respondents indicated that the quality of the “Printed Material” was in the “Good” to “Excellent” range.

Concerning the “Temperature” of the auditorium no-one checked “Very Poor” or “Poor” (0%), 2 marked “Good” (10%), 1 checked “Very Good” (5%), and 17 people endorsed “Excellent” (80%). One person did not answer this question (5%).

In summary, all but one of the respondents indicated that the “Temperature” in the venue was in the “Good” to “Excellent” range.

On the quality of the “Sound” system no-one checked “Very Poor” or “Poor” (0%), 1 marked “Good” (5%), 2 checked “Very Good” (10%), and 17 people endorsed “Excellent” (80%). One person did not answer this question (5%).

In summary, all but one of the respondents indicated that the quality of the “Sound” system was in the “Good” to “Excellent” range.

When the participants were asked to evaluate how comfortable the “Seating” was no-one checked “Very Poor” or “Poor” (0%), 1 marked “Good” (5%), 2 checked “Very

Good” (10%), and 17 people endorsed “Excellent” (80%). One person did not answer this question (5%).

In summary, all but one of the respondents indicated that the “Seating” in the venue was in the “Good” to “Excellent” range. These overall positive ratings about the quality of the seminar were gratifying to the presenter.

Pre-Test and Post-Test Comparisons

This section is a comparison of the responses to Survey 2, Part II, and Survey 3, which were identical surveys designed to evaluate the interpersonal relationships in the church before and after the seminar.

Question 1. “When a member of the church or visitor talks to me, I usually listen very carefully to what the person is saying.”

Pre-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 0%, “Disagree” 6%, “Neutral” 14%, “Agree” 36%, and “Strongly Agree” 36%. No answer to question 8%.

Post-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 0%, “Disagree” 0%, “Neutral” 0%, “Agree” 33%, and “Strongly Agree” 67%.

The results indicate that at the end of the seminar more of the respondents “Listened” carefully when they were spoken to, than did so before the seminar.

Question 2. “All my attention is given to the person who is talking to me.”

Pre-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 3%, “Disagree” 3%, “Neutral” 8%, “Agree” 42%, and “Strongly Agree” 33%. No answer to question 11%.

Post-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 0%, “Disagree” 0%, “Neutral” 5%, “Agree” 29%, and “Strongly Agree” 66%.

The results indicate that at the end of the seminar more of the respondents “Attended” carefully when they were spoken to, than did so before the seminar.

Question 3. “When I get to church I greet people regardless if they are members or not.”

Pre-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 6%, “Disagree” 3%, “Neutral” 6%, “Agree” 36%, and “Strongly Agree” 38%. No answer to question 11%.

Post-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 5%, “Disagree” 0%, “Neutral” 10%, “Agree” 24%, and “Strongly Agree” 61%.

The results indicate that at the end of the seminar more of the respondents “Greeted” members and guests at church, than did so before the seminar.

Question 4. “I have thought of leaving the church because of a problem with a member.”

Pre-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 58%, “Disagree” 17%, “Neutral” 11%, “Agree” 3%, and “Strongly Agree” 0%. No answer to question 11%.

Post-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 66%, “Disagree” 14%, “Neutral” 10%, “Agree” 0%, and “Strongly Agree” 5%. No answer to question 5%.

The results indicate that at the end of the seminar there was stronger disagreement with the notion of “Leaving the Church” because of a problem with a member than was the case before the seminar.

Question 5. “When somebody confronts me with a different opinion I get upset easily.”

Pre-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 28%, “Disagree” 30%, “Neutral” 22%, “Agree” 6%, and “Strongly Agree” 3%. No answer to question 11%.

Post-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 33%, “Disagree” 53%, “Neutral” 14%, “Agree” 0%, and “Strongly Agree” 0%.

The results indicate that at the end of the seminar, there was stronger disagreement with the statement about “Getting upset” when confronted than was the case before the seminar.

Question 6. “I often get mad at people.”

Pre-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 45%, “Disagree” 25%, “Neutral” 11%, “Agree” 8%, and “Strongly Agree” 0%. No answer to question 11%.

Post-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 52%, “Disagree” 38%, “Neutral” 5%, “Agree” 0%, and “Strongly Agree” 5%.

The results indicate that at the end of the seminar there was stronger disagreement with the statement about “Getting mad at people” than was the case before the seminar.

Question 7. “When somebody hurts my feelings is it easy for me to forgive.”

Pre-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 8%, “Disagree” 6%, “Neutral” 17%, “Agree” 28%, and “Strongly Agree” 33%. No answer to question 8%.

Post-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 5%, “Disagree” 0%, “Neutral” 29%, “Agree” 24%, and “Strongly Agree” 42%.

The results indicate that at the end of the seminar there was stronger agreement with the statement about “Forgiving after hurt feelings” than was the case before the seminar.

Question 8. “I think that loving one another is a very crucial issue to fulfill our mission as a church.”

Pre-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 6%, “Disagree” 3%, “Neutral” 0%, “Agree” 8%, and “Strongly Agree” 72%. No answer to question 11%.

Post-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 5%, “Disagree” 0%, “Neutral” 5%, “Agree” 10%, and “Strongly Agree” 80%.

The results indicate that at the end of the seminar there was stronger agreement with the statement about “Loving and the mission of the church” than before the seminar.

Question 9. “I would rather attend a prophecy seminar instead of an interpersonal relationship seminar.”

Pre-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 8%, “Disagree” 25%, “Neutral” 40%, “Agree” 11%, and “Strongly Agree” 8%. No answer to question 8%.

Post-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 0%, “Disagree” 0%, “Neutral” 5%, “Agree” 33%, and “Strongly Agree” 62%.

The results indicate that at the end of the seminar there was stronger agreement with the statement about “Preferring to attend a Prophecy Seminar” than was the case before the seminar. This finding was somewhat contrary to expectation.

Question 10. “I consider my congregation as a really friendly church.”

Pre-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 6%, “Disagree” 0%, “Neutral” 14%, “Agree” 41%, and “Strongly Agree” 31%. No answer to question 8%.

Post-Test: “Strongly Disagree” 0%, “Disagree” 5%, “Neutral” 14%, “Agree” 57%, and “Strongly Agree” 24%.

The results indicate that at the end of the seminar there was much stronger agreement with the statement that the congregation was “a really friendly church” than was the case before the seminar.

Summary

To the extent that the findings of these surveys reflect the actual changes in the respondents that they seem to indicate, the general expectations about the benefits of the seminar were realized.

It was anticipated that the participants would see as much or greater usefulness in the Relationship Seminar than a Prophecy Seminar, however, this was not the case. Preference for a Prophecy Seminar actually increased. One may infer that one of the reasons why this may be so is that the Relationship Seminar was more demanding of personal effort and change than is typical when members attend a Prophecy Seminar.

The answers to questions about the presenter, content, and environment of the seminar show the positive impact the seminar had on the participants. The results would suggest that the seminar was successful in improving the church's motivation to progress in this important area of interpersonal relationships. As far as can be ascertained by informal feedback from the participants, the seminar accomplished its goals of providing resources to help church members improve their lives in this complex society. It also helped the congregation to think theologically on the subject of good relationships.

CHAPTER 6

BENEFITS TO MY MINISTRY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Goals of the Seminar

The first goal of this project was for me to learn more about this fascinating topic. Dealing with people is a challenge that has practical implications and consequences that affect each of us in one way or another. Therefore, I wanted to increase my knowledge about this very important area in my ministry.

The second goal was to prepare and deliver a seminar to my church family on the subject of relationships and how relationships impact evangelism. This goal was born out of my passion for teaching and my role and responsibility as a church pastor, which is to train my congregation “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:12).

Benefits to My Ministry

A pastor of a congregation such as mine with significant differences in age groups, cultural backgrounds and social status faces tremendous challenges both professionally and personally.

I have personally been enriched by this study in many ways. I believe the project has given me the opportunity to understand that it is impossible to please everybody. As a pastor my tendency was to please, and to attempt to make everybody happy. I believed

that conflict is a negative and avoidable thing. During the research process I realized that my ideas were utopian. Conflict is not only unavoidable but it can also be considered a sign of a healthy community. It is virtually impossible to find a community that has not experienced conflict. One author has stated, “No relationship exists long without tensions. No community continues long without conflicts” (Augsburger, 1981, Prologue). Therefore, the problem is not the conflict but how it is approached and resolved.

Furthermore, the seminar had a definite impact on my personal experience and on my understanding of the importance of being a facilitator, coach, and trainer for my congregation. I realized that church members are eager for new information that will help them to become better individuals and better Christians. Sermonizing on a weekly basis is not enough. Training in practical areas is not only important, but vital when building a healthy church.

This doctoral project has provided several additional important benefits to my ministry.

The Project Improved My Interpersonal Skills

One of the primary benefits to my ministry is that I feel that I have grown in relationships skills, especially in becoming a better communicator. As a pastor it is vital to be a good communicator, something that I had taken for granted. For example the temptation to bring my own agenda to a meeting or pastoral visit, and to expect others to listen to what I had to say, was often my approach. This research and project has helped me to diminish this tendency considerably. Learning about the importance of not only listening to the words but also observing the body language, emotions, and feelings of others have been of a tremendous benefit for my personal life and ministry.

The Project Increased My Ability to Conduct a Seminar

I have come to believe that more attention should be given to teaching than to preaching in any church setting. The role of the pastor should be to equip the church “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph 4:12). This project helped me to feel competent to conduct an effective relationship seminar and encouraged me to conduct many other seminars as well.

The Project Improved My Sermons

This project helped me to make my sermons more practical and applicable. My sermons are now addressed to finding solutions as we face real and daily problems or temptations.

The Project Helped Me to Realize the Importance of This Subject

Not until I read more widely on relationships and saw the results obtained from the surveys did I realize that most of the problems seen at church and in many other situations derive from a lack of knowledge about relationship skills.

What Went Well

The second objective in preparing this seminar was to help the members to understand the importance of healthy relationships and to develop skills to improve their relationships. The fourth questionnaire, which contained questions about the presenter, content, and environment of the seminar, shows the positive impact the seminar had on the participants, an impact that surpassed my expectations. The results would suggest that the seminar was successful in improving the church’s motivation to progress in this important area of interpersonal relationships.

Although I wish there had been more participants, the seminar accomplished its goals of providing resources that would help church members improve their lives in this complex society. It also helped the congregation to think theologically on the subject of good relationships.

Another factor that confirms how well the seminar went was the positive response from the attendees. An average of 35 people attended the 12 sessions. These 35 people were very consistent in their attendance. In addition, not only were they present meeting after meeting but they participated very enthusiastically. Some of the things they engaged in throughout the seminar included, small-group involvement, asking questions, discussions, addressing practical situations, taking notes, and seeking private pastoral counsel on the subject.

Study guides were distributed for each person attending. It was very encouraging to see the participants filling in the blanks with eagerness, compiling all the study guides, and reviewing them often. It was exactly the purpose we had in mind as we prepared this material. Moreover, each study guide had a recommended bibliography which was brought to the participant's attention at the end of each lecture. Some of the members not only asked for more information about these books but bought them.

Those who attended expressed sincere gratitude for the information that was shared. Many people approached me and said they now understood with clarity how important it is for practicing Christians to develop good relationships. And their prayer is, for God's empowerment to embrace and use the principles and ideas presented throughout the seminar.

Conclusion

As a result of presenting my seminar on relationships entitled “Better Christian–Better Person”, I have drawn the following conclusions.

1. I have recognized that it is important to provide resources that help members to improve their lives in this complex society. While doctrines and church standards are important, the practical aspects of the Gospel must also be evident in every believer. Before the seminar, many of those surveyed thought that the church was in good shape in terms of relationships. Others never pondered the importance of good relationships or the connections these make with spirituality and evangelism. After the seminar the members understood more clearly the reasons why good relationships are so important. They recognized that as Christians we must seek to develop healthy relationships with others—especially with our family members and fellow Christians.

2. It became clear that most members had not previously recognized the theological implications of good relationships as presented in chapter 2. Among the theological and biblical principles discussed were the three relationship themes found in Gen 1-3, which were perfect, wholly, and healthy in the experience of Adam and Eve at first, but which were severely distorted after sin entered the picture. Another biblical principle was stated by Jesus in John 13:34-35 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another”. These words and those in the Golden Rule of Luke 6:30 had a significant impact on the participants. The understanding that Ellen White wrote extensively about unity and love in the church as a main characteristic of God’s transforming power among its members, as one of the strongest evidence of a

genuine conversion and as a powerful tool to reach unbelievers, resulted in a tremendous blessing for the attendees. For many, it was their first exposure to ideas that they had never considered before. Because of cultural and ethnic differences many church members had considered some of the relational issues as irrelevant and unnecessary. Others, due to their military or social background, related to people in a way expected in the military or in their places of work. After learning the biblical principles about relationships they experienced many benefits and blessings not only in the religious arena, but in all areas of life.

3. The value of using the four questionnaires that were distributed throughout the seminar was confirmed. Three out of the four questionnaires were intentionally given to draw from the participants' information related to the life experience of the congregation in terms of relationships. The fourth survey was designed to evaluate the seminar itself and it was given after the last session. The overall results of these questionnaires show a significant difference between the participant's perspective and understanding about interpersonal relationships before the seminar compared to their attitude after the seminar. In 9 out of the 10 questions asked, desired improvements were revealed. One example of this is the participants' perspective on becoming a friendly church. Even though the evaluation was based on the respondents' opinions and not necessarily on the reality of how friendly the local church was an improvement in perceptions of the local church as a really friendly congregation was evident. When the participants were asked if they had considered Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist Church a really friendly church 41% agreed and 31% strongly agreed before the seminar. However, after the seminar 57% agreed and 24% strongly agreed—a combined increase of 9%. This 9% rise in

combined percentages could be a direct consequence of a clearer understanding by the participants about what a friendly church looks like. If this is the case it appears that they became friendlier as a result of the seminar.

4. It became more apparent that significant time needs to be invested in training and perhaps less to preaching. I am not suggesting that preaching is unnecessary but today more than ever the pastor has to take on the biblical role of equipper and coach. Throughout the presentation of this seminar participants were eager to study new things and apply the principles learned in their lifestyle. The context of this seminar was very convenient because it gave the participants the opportunity to ask questions, formulate objections, and express their emotions.

5. I recognized at the end of the seminar that follow-up presentations were needed, so I developed a sermon series to meet this need. Improvement in church attendance, eagerness of members to participate in church services, and an overall revitalization of the congregation came about as a result of this series.

Recommendations

The following recommendations deal with both the seminar and the topic and apply to changes that I would like to make the next time I present this seminar and to others who might consider using this material in their own congregations.

1. This seminar focused mainly on the theoretical aspects of interpersonal relationships and increased the awareness of the participants about the importance of good relationships particularly with reference to evangelism.

2. One of the practical ideas to enhance the seminar would be the formation of small groups where the participants pray and encourage each other to put into practice all

the principles and skills learned. More time needs to be given to skill building exercises and at the end of each session participants need to be reminded to practice these skills and bring a report of their experiences to the next session.

3. In the two final sessions on forgiveness, members should be encouraged to approach individuals who have offended them or who were offended by them and seek reconciliation. They can also be encouraged to inform the presenter about the outcome of these efforts. Where appropriate they can give their testimonies at the last session.

4. One entire session of the seminar (Session 10) dealt with the issue of conflict. Several points were addressed such as conflict in the Bible, the benefit of conflict, confrontation and evaluation of the conflict. Although a conflict-resolution method was mentioned it would have been better to have spent more time developing and practicing this process. This emphasis should include, treating the other person with respect, listening with empathy, accurately presenting view points, feelings, and needs, and finding a mature, Christian solution, (Bolton, 1979, pp.220-222).

5. Include refreshments as a motivation to increase the attendance. In the Hawaiian culture, food, and fellowship are interrelated and necessary. This is one of the reasons why every church across the territory of the Hawaiian Conference has potluck on Sabbath after the service. If I had considered this point and made arrangements in advance, perhaps the attendance at the seminar would have been higher.

6. The next time that I present this seminar, I intend to add practical exercises in the sessions that focus on communication skills, conflict management, and forgiveness. I also intend to encourage members to invite people from the community to attend the seminar and to interact with them in beneficial ways.

7. The number of sessions should be modified and adapted to the participants' schedule. Having 12 or fewer consecutive Sabbath morning sessions rather than including the Wednesday and Friday meetings would likely increase attendance.

8. I intend to revise and upgrade the study guides, script, advertisement, and format to better meet the needs of the congregation where the seminar will be presented.

9. I intend to include attendance cards so that I can make personal contact with the participants at a time other than the seminar. I could also include commitment cards to which the participants could respond to each night's appeal. In addition, I would consider developing a series of PowerPoint presentations, shortening the script and re-evaluating, and perhaps simplifying the questionnaires.

Follow-up Plans

Generally speaking people responded to this seminar in a very positive way. This shows the interest they had in improving their relationships. Even though 12 presentations were given on the subject, along with study guides and practical discussions, it was not enough. Since the culmination of this seminar, I have continued developing a series of sermons on the topic to encourage the congregation to both remember what was discussed and learned in the seminar and to put it into practice. In order to fulfill these two goals, short seminars and revivals throughout the year have been planned and executed. This emphasis seems to have positively affected attendance at church meetings and improvements in interpersonal interactions have been observed.

A number of books have been written for the purpose of improving our relationships especially in the context of church ministry. Many pastors and leaders would find some of the materials that have been included in the Bibliography of this

project beneficial. Moreover, every pastor needs to know that trying to make everybody happy in a church setting is neither possible nor healthy. Confronting others with the goal of resolving a conflict and restoring the relationship must be practiced and modeled by the pastors and leaders of the churches. As the local church leadership promotes and models the importance of healthy relationships people will likely follow and embrace the practical ideas and principles presented.

APPENDIX A

SEMINAR INVITATION

WAIPAHU SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Presents

Better Person-Better Christian

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

**Completely
Free!**

"The most useful person in the world today is the man or woman who knows how to get along with other people. Human relations is the most important science in living."

Stanley C. Allyn

Don't Miss it!



Detailed Schedule:

Wednesday, April 1 at 7:15 PM

Friday, April 3 at 7:15 PM

Saturday, April 4 at 11:00 PM

Wednesday, April 8 at 7:15 PM

Friday, April 10 at 7:15 PM

Saturday, April 11 at 11:00 AM

Wednesday, April 15 at 7:15 PM

Saturday, April 18 at 11:00 PM

Wednesday, April 22 at 7:15 PM

Friday, April 24 at 7:15 PM

Saturday, April 25 at 11:00 AM

General Information

Place:

Waipahu Seventh Day
Adventist Church
94-900 Awane'i St.
Waipahu, HI 96797

Dates:

April 1, 2009 to
April 25, 2009
(See detailed
schedule)

Contact:

Phone #:
671-4667
389-8796

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRES

Survey 1

Survey 1. The following questions have been designed to quantify the interpersonal relationships of the Waipahu Seventh-day Adventist Church. Please select the best classification that most accurately describes the quality of your local church in interpersonal relationships and evangelism

1. How satisfied are you with the love and care demonstrated by the church members in your congregation?

- ☐ Not satisfied
- ☐ Minimally satisfied
- ☐ Moderately satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Totally satisfied

2. How important is love and care to the effectiveness of church growth?

- ☐ Not important
- ☐ Minimally important
- ☐ Moderately important
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Totally important

3. How often is there interpersonal conflict in your congregation?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Hardly ever
- ☐ Seldom
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

4. How often have you had a seminar or series of sermons on interpersonal relationships in your church?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Hardly ever
- ☐ Seldom
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

5. How often do you think the church should have a seminar or series of sermons on interpersonal relationships?

☐ Never
☐ Hardly ever
☐ Seldom
☐ Often
☐ Very often

6. How often do you invite a neighbor, friend, or relative to any of your local church services, socials, or events?

☐ Never
☐ Hardly ever
☐ Seldom
☐ Often
☐ Very often

7. My local church is fulfilling the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ of spreading the Gospel and baptizing people in my own community?

☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Mildly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly agree

8. After a local visitor attends your church for the first time how often does he/she return to any of the church services, socials, and events?

☐ Never
☐ Hardly ever
☐ Seldom
☐ Often
☐ Very often

Survey 2

Survey 2, Part 1. Introduction. The following questions relate to personal information. Please select one answer for each question.

1. Gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

2. What is your age range? Select your answer

☐ 20-30 years

☐ 31-40 years

☐ 41-50 years

☐ 51-60 years

☐ 61-70 years

☐ 71 and over

3. Indicate your highest level of education completed

☐ High School

☐ Associate Degree

☐ Bachelor's Degree

☐ Master's Degree

☐ Doctorate

Part 2. The following questions have been designed to evaluate the interpersonal relationships of church members before the seminar. Please remember that all the answers to these questions **must** be in the context of your local church. Please circle one response for each question.

Scale: SD = Strongly Disagree
 D = Disagree
 N = Neutral
 A = Agree
 SA = Strongly Agree

Interpersonal Relationships Information Before the Seminar						
1.	When a member of the church or visitor talks to me, I usually listen very carefully to what the person is saying	SD	D	N	A	SA
2.	All my attention is given to the person who is talking to me	SD	D	N	A	SA
3.	When I get to church I greet people regardless if they are members or not	SD	D	N	A	SA
4.	I have thought of leaving the church because of a problem with a member	SD	D	N	A	SA
5.	When somebody confronts me with a different opinion I get upset easily	SD	D	N	A	SA
6.	I often get mad at people	SD	D	N	A	SA
7.	When somebody hurts my feelings is it easy for me to forgive	SD	D	N	A	SA
8.	I think that loving one another is a very crucial issue to fulfill our mission as a church	SD	D	N	A	SA
9.	I would rather attend a prophecy seminar instead of an interpersonal relationship seminar	SD	D	N	A	SA
10.	I consider my congregation as a really friendly church	SD	D	N	A	SA

Survey 3

The following questions have been designed to evaluate the interpersonal relationships of church members after the seminar. Please circle one response for each question.

Scale: SD = Strongly Disagree
 D = Disagree
 N= Neutral
 A= Agree
 SA = Strongly Agree

Interpersonal Relationships Information After the Seminar						
1.	When a member of the church or visitor talks to me, I usually listen very carefully to what the person is saying	SD	D	N	A	SA
2.	All my attention is given to the person who is talking to me	SD	D	N	A	SA
3.	When I get to church I greet people regardless if they are members or not	SD	D	N	A	SA
4.	I have thought of leaving the church because of a problem with a member	SD	D	N	A	SA
5.	When somebody confronts me with a different opinion I get upset easily	SD	D	N	A	SA
6.	I often get mad at people	SD	D	N	A	SA
7.	When somebody hurts my feelings is it easy for me to forgive	SD	D	N	A	SA
8.	I think that loving one another is a very crucial issue to fulfill our mission as a church	SD	D	N	A	SA
9.	I would rather attend a prophecy seminar instead of an interpersonal relationship seminar	SD	D	N	A	SA
10.	I consider my congregation as a really friendly church	SD	D	N	A	SA

Survey 4

The Seminar. Please circle the classification that most accurately describes the quality of both the presenter and the presentation. Scale: 1 (**Very Poor**) 2 (**Poor**) 3 (**Good**) 4 (**Very Good**) and 5 (**Excellent**)

Seminar Title: Better Person-Better Christian

Presenter

Presenter

Preparation	1	2	3	4	5
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Presentation	1	2	3	4	5
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Use of Media	1	2	3	4	5
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Content

Organization	1	2	3	4	5
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Quality	1	2	3	4	5
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Relevancy	1	2	3	4	5
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Printed Material	1	2	3	4	5
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Environment

Temperature	1	2	3	4	5
-------------	---	---	---	---	---

Sound	1	2	3	4	5
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Seating	1	2	3	4	5
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APPENDIX C

SEMINAR STUDY GUIDES



SESSION 1

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Good Relationships as the foundation for a healthy society

- The term “healthy society” does not refer to a society or community exempt from _____, _____, and _____.
- Whenever two or more persons are involved in a relationship there is going to be _____, misinterpretation, _____ and conflict.
- Dr. John C. Maxwell says: “The only way to avoid conflict is to isolate ourselves from all other people on the planet.”¹
- Tension, misinterpretation and conflict are _____.
- David Augsburger says: “*No relationship exists long without tensions. No community continues long without conflicts.*”²

A healthy society (home, church, work) is not the one where tension and conflicts do not exist (because we can’t avoid them). A healthy society is formed by those who understand:

- I. How to _____ to the problem or conflict.
- II. The right _____ in relating with others.
- III. The _____ we place on the individual.

- Dale Carnegie made a pioneer work in relationships during the first half of twentieth century. He said:

“When dealing with people, let us remember we are not dealing with creatures of logic. We are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures bristling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity.”³

- Everybody holds unresolved emotional issues that shape their daily lives.
- Some of these issues might be:

I. _____ from childhood.

II. _____.

III. Poor _____.

Many of our reactions, behavior, and choices are made unconsciously based on previous experiences.
--

- John Maxwell quotes Allyn: ***“The most useful person in the world today is the man or woman who knows how to get along with other people. Human relations is the most important science in living.”⁴***

Human relations is the most important science of living.
--

- Alfred Adler, a well recognized Viennese psychologist, said once:

“It is the individual who is not interested in his fellow men who has the greatest difficulties in life and provides the greatest injury to others. It is from among such individuals that all human failures spring.”⁵

Importance of good relationships in business

- The founder of MaryKay cosmetics, Mary Kay Ash, said once:

“Everyone has an invisible sign hanging from his neck saying, ‘Make me feel important.’ Never forget this message when working with people.”⁶

Everybody has a need to feel important.

- A survey of 100 self-made businessmen who later became millionaires revealed one common factor; these highly successful individuals saw only the good in people.⁷

Great Habit: See always the good in people.
--

- Businessman Mark H. McCormack says:

“Whether I’m selling or buying, whether I’m hired or (in our capacity as consultants) being hired; whether I’m negotiating a contract or responding to someone’s else demands, I want to know where the other person is coming from. I want to know the other person’s real self.”⁸

Success in business is associated with the ability to know and interact with people.
--

- Research confirmed that success is measured by 15% theoretical knowledge of the product and 85% understanding and knowledge of the persons responsible for the product.⁹

Connection between leadership and good relationships

- Leadership is _____.
- A true leader is one who is aware of the influence he/she has over others and who motivates and encourages them for the good.¹⁰

- If you want to be a true leader (at home, church, work) you need to:
 - I. Treat people with: Love, Respect, Concern, Help, Action and sensitivity.
 - II. Provide hope and motivate.
 - III. Become a model.
 - IV. Think, believe and express the best in others.
 - V. Develop others (Help them to grow).

Next Meeting-Friday April 3 @ 7:15 PM
Good Relationship and the Bible, Part I.

References

1. John C. Maxwell, *Winning with People* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 110.
 2. David Augsburger, *Caring Enough to Not Forgive* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1981), Prologue.
 3. Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence Others* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1936), 27.
 4. Maxwell, *Winning with People*, 1.
 5. Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence Others* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1936), 59.
 6. John C. Maxwell, *Relationships 101* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 27.
 7. Ibid., 37.
 8. Mark H. McCormack, *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1984), 5.
 9. John C. Maxwell, *Be a People Person* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Books, 1994), 47.
 10. John C. Maxwell, *Becoming a Person of Influence* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997).
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SESSION 2

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Good Relationships in the Bible - Old Testament

- ☐ Humanity is more _____ today than ever.
- ☐ The Bible provides a trustworthy _____ of the origin of broken relationships, a good foundation for _____, and the path to _____.
- ☐ Fellowship with God made it possible for humans to have perfect harmony with _____, the natural world, and _____.

In Genesis 1-3 we find four relationships:

- I. Human to God (_____ relation).
- II. Human to human (_____ relation).
- III. Human to physical world (_____ relation).
- IV. Human to self (_____ relation).

- ☐ All these four relations are _____ or interrelated. Genesis 1-3 is a perfect world, a world of “shalom”: _____, peace, health, wholeness, and _____.
-

Oxford professor C.S. Lewis was right when he said:

“What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could ‘be like gods,’ could set up on their own as if they had created themselves, be their own masters, invent some sort of happiness for themselves outside God, apart from God. And out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history, money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.”¹

- Sin enters the picture and _____ all these four relations.
- Dr. Francis Schaeffer is helpful here when he commented:

“The Bible says, that man fell, at a specific point of history, and as man fell, both man and the world over which he had dominion became abnormal.”²

- Every problem of _____ and conflict is a direct result of the _____.
- In Revelation 21 and 22 all four relationships are restored.
- Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18.
- Mike Aufderhar says:

“Man by himself does not reveal the total image of God, because, to have the complete picture of how God is, they must be together, man and woman.”³

- Man and woman together reveal in its fullness the _____ of God.
- God’s image is what God is (1 John 4:8) “God is love.”

The image of God has been manifested in a continual harmonious relationship of love within Father, Son, and Holy Spirit before the beginning of _____.

- Whidden, Moon, and Reeve argue the following:

“Could one who has existed from all eternity past and who made us in His loving image, could this God truly be called love if He existed only as a solitary being? Is not love, especially divine love, possible only if the one who made our universe was a plural being who was exercising ‘love’ within His divine plurality from all eternity past? . . . Is the Creator God, who is called love, in any way finally dependent upon His created beings to reveal and demonstrate His love? . . . Genuine love requires that there be someone who can be loved. . . . But these words, ‘God is love,’ have no real meaning unless God is at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God were a single person, then before the universe was made, he was not love. . . . Furthermore, perfect love is possible only between equals. Just as a man cannot satisfy or realize his powers of love by loving the lower animals, so God cannot satisfy or realize his love by loving man or any creature. . . .’ Only the plural unity of the Trinity explains this. . . . There was a time when the universe was not, and if God’s blessedness and perfection depended upon the universe, then there would have been a time when God was neither self-conscious (nor) blessed.”⁴

- God places the importance of healthy relationships in the _____ (Exodus 20).
- The famous Old Testament scholar Herbert Wolf says:

“There are differences of opinion about the exact way the Ten Commandments are divided up, but all agree that the initial commands address man’s relationship with God and the later commands deal with man’s relationship with man. . . . “When asked which of the commandments was the most important, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:5 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Matt. 22:37), which is a summary of the first four commandments. The second commandment, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39), sums up the last six commandments.”⁵

- Leviticus 25:17 (NIV).
- Psalm 15:1-5 (NIV).
- The relationship between _____ and _____ is a great example on the principle of loving and caring relationships.
- 1 Samuel 1:18.
- Proverbs 27:17.
- God's promises will be manifested upon those that rise above _____ and _____ (Isaiah 58:6-14; Proverbs 14:31; Jeremiah 7:5-7).
- Micah 6:8

Next Meeting-Tomorrow April 4 @ 11:00 AM
Good Relationship and the Bible, Part II.

References

1. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York, New York: Harper San Francisco, 1952), 49.
 2. Francis Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publisher, 1971), 70.
 3. Mike Aufderhar, "Marriage Is Not Old Fashioned," in *Religion in Relationships*, ed. Felix Cortés (Miami, FL: APIA, 2004), 35.
 4. Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John Reeve, *The Trinity* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002), 115-116.
 5. Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991), 152.
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SESSION 3

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Good Relationships in the Bible - New Testament

- Christians are called to love, care, and forgive their _____ Matthew 5:38-47.
- The German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, stated:

“In the New Testament our enemies are those who harbour hostility against us, not those against whom we cherish hostility, for Jesus refuses to reckon with such a possibility. The Christian must treat his enemy as a brother.”¹

<p>The Jesus’ principle: Everything Jesus did and said was to benefit others.</p>
--

- John 13:34, 35. Four (4) basic implications:
 - I. These words were aimed to the intimate circle of _____.
 - II. This is a _____.
 - III. We are called to love others the same way Jesus loved us. How did Jesus love us? With an _____ love.
 - IV. The result of loving one another as Christians will be that “all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.” (John 13:35)
-

True Christianity is accredited when sincere love is practiced among Christians.

- Sincere love will cause unbelievers to recognize the _____ of those who claim to be Jesus' disciples.
- Dr. Francis Schaeffer is helpful here when he commented:

“In the midst of the world, in the midst of our present dying culture, Jesus is giving a right to the world. Upon his authority he gives the world the right to judge whether you and I are born-again Christians on the basis of our observable love toward all Christians. That’s pretty frightening. Jesus turns to the world and says, ‘I’ve something to say to you. On the basis of my authority, I give you a right: you may judge whether or not an individual is a Christian on the basis of the love he shows to all Christians. . . . Here Jesus is talking about our responsibility as individuals and as groups to so love all other true Christians that the world will have no valid reason for saying that we are not Christians. . . . We cannot expect the world to believe that the Father sent the Son, that Jesus’ claims are true, and that Christianity is true, unless the world sees some reality of the oneness of true Christians . . . This is the whole point: The world is going to judge whether Jesus has been sent by the Father on the basis of something that is open to observation.’”²

- In days where absolute truth is not relevant anymore, a true sense of community expressed by a sincere love among the members of the church will be the _____ to present the pertinent message of the gospel of Jesus Christ in a successful way.

The Golden _____: “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31 NIV).

- In general people want to be _____, appreciated, _____, respected, and understood. Also people commonly do not want others to take _____ of them.

□ John 17:20-23.

- I. The main purpose for this prayer is _____ among the believers “that all of them may be one” (v. 21).
- II. Unity among believers must be measured or based in the unity the Father and Son have, “Father, just as you are in me and I am in you” (v. 21).
- III. To be united represents to be in the Father and Son, “May they also be in us” (v. 21).
- IV. As a result of this unity among the believers, the _____ will know that Jesus Christ is the Messiah sent by God; “so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (v. 21).
- V. Jesus emphasizes again the importance of becoming _____, “that they may be one as we are one” (v. 22).
- VI. Jesus not only expects that his follower remain united; he expects a complete or _____ unity, “May they be brought to complete unity” (v. 23).

□ Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 10:24; 2 Corinthians 13:11.

□ Ephesians 4: 2, 3, 23, 31, 32.

- I. Being completely _____.
 - II. Being completely _____.
 - III. Being patient.
 - IV. Bearing with one another in love.
 - V. Making every effort possible to keep _____ and unity.
-

- VI. Speaking the _____ to the neighbor.
 - VII. Controlling _____ and not letting it to offend the neighbor.
 - VIII. Speaking not to destroy but to _____, encourage, and benefit others.
 - IX. Getting rid of all bitterness, anger, slander, and any form of malice.
 - X. _____ each other as Christ forgave the church.
- Ephesians 5:1; Colossians 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; Hebrews 12:14.

“Yet love united to Christological confession is the one unfailing test of those who truly are God’s children (4:7; 5:1). Where there is no love at work, there is no Christianity. This implies that Christianity is not purely a matter of individual salvation, since love cannot be practiced by one person alone. Knowing God, loving, being confident of eternal life, all the things that we might consider ‘spiritual’ are real only in concrete living in community with other human beings.”³

- 1 John 2:8-11; 3:11, 18; 4:11;

Next Meeting-Wednesday April 8 @ 7:15 PM
Good Relationship in Ellen White Writings-Good Relationships
and Spirituality.

References

1. Dietric Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1937), 164.
 2. Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Mark of the Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970), 13-14.
 3. David Rensberger, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 22.
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SESSION 4

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Good Relationships in Ellen White Writings

- Seventh-day Adventists recognize the writings of Ellen G. White as authoritative especially in the area of practical _____.
 - George K. Knight says, *“Ellen White’s writings have been a blessing to countless thousands who have read them during the past century and a half. They have proved to be a helpful and reliable guide to those in all walks of life.”*¹
1. God as the source of _____, understanding unity and _____.

*“...seek for unity; cultivate love and conformity to Christ in all things. He is the source of unity and strength; but you have not sought for Christian unity that you might knit hearts together in love. . . . If you do as God would have you, His blessing will come into the church.”*²

*“The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties, though there will be much of this to do, but union with Christ. Picture a large circle, from the edge of which are many lines all running toward the center. The nearer these lines approach the center, the nearer they are to one another. Thus it is in the Christian life. The closer we come to Christ, the nearer we shall be to one another.”*³

2. According to White God is _____ every time the church fails in loving relationships. She says, ***“Divisions in the church dishonor the religion of Christ before the world and give occasion to the enemies of truth to justify their course.”***⁴ ***“God is glorified as His people unite in harmonious action.”***⁵
3. Unity in the church is a main characteristic of God’s _____ power among its members. ***“One of the strongest evidences of true conversion is love to God and man. Those who accept Jesus as their Redeemer have a deep, sincere love for others of like precious faith.”***⁶
4. Unity is an undeniable evidence of the _____ at work among the believers. ***“We have need of divine illumination. Every individual is striving to become a center of influence, and until God works for His people, they will not see that subordination to God is the only safety for any soul. His transforming grace upon human hearts will lead to unity that has not yet been realized, for all who are assimilated to Christ will be in harmony with one another. The Holy Spirit will create unity.”***⁷
5. A Healthy-loving relationship among the believers is a powerful tool to reach _____. ***“The evidence that the world cannot withstand and controvert, that God has sent Jesus into the world as its Redeemer, is in the oneness of the church. Their unity and harmony is the convincing argument. Satan is therefore constantly at work to prevent this harmony and union, that in witnessing the bickerings, strifes, and dissension, unbelievers shall become disgusted with Christianity, and fastened in unbelief and infidelity. God is dishonored by those who profess the truth while they are at variance with one another.”***⁸
6. Loving one another and building a close bond of unity is a strong evidence of a Christ-like _____. ***“The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within. It is the atmosphere of this love surrounding the soul of the believer that makes him a savor of life unto life and enables God to bless his work.”***⁹

-
7. Love is an active _____. *“Love is an active principle; it keeps the good of others continually before us, thus restraining us from inconsiderate action...”¹⁰*
8. The Jesus’ Principle. *In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace, in ‘the beauty of the Lord our God.’ Psalm 90:17. Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man’s true ideal, He awakened, for its attainment, both desire and faith. In His presence souls despised and fallen realized that they still were men, and they longed to prove themselves worthy of His regard. In many a heart that seemed dead to all things holy, were awakened new impulses. To many a despairing one there opened the possibility of a new life. Christ bound men to His heart by the ties of love and devotion; and by the same ties He bound them to their fellow men. With Him love was life, and life was service.”¹¹*
9. Importance of _____ and loving _____, courtesy and high modals. *“Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others. Let them reveal Christlike forbearance and patience, speaking no hasty words, using the talent of speech to build one another up in the most holy faith.”¹² “The good qualities which many possess are hidden, and instead of attracting souls to Christ they repulse them... If these persons could see the influence of their uncourteous ways and unkind expressions upon unbelievers and how offensive is such conduct in the sight of God, they would reform their habits, for a lack of courtesy is one of the greatest stumbling blocks to sinners. . . . Let Christ be seen in all that you do. Let all see that you are living epistles of Jesus Christ. . . . Be lovable. Let your life win the hearts of all who are brought in contact with you. . . . Every word you speak, every action you perform, has an influence for good or evil upon those who associate with you; and, oh! how necessary it is that you have Christ dwelling in your heart by faith, that your words may be words of life, and your works, the works of love.”¹³*
-

10. Unity and love within the church will reveal Christ's _____ and forgiveness. ***“If we keep uppermost in our minds the unkind and unjust acts of others we shall find it impossible to love them as Christ has loved us; but if our thoughts dwell upon the wondrous love and pity of Christ for us, the same spirit will flow out to others. We should love and respect one another, notwithstanding the faults and imperfections that we cannot help seeing. Humility and self-distrust should be cultivated, and a patient tenderness with the faults of others. This will kill out all narrowing selfishness and make us large-hearted and generous.”***¹⁴

References

1. George R. Knight, *Reading Ellen White* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1997), 10.
 2. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 348.
 3. Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1977), 501-502.
 4. Ellen G. White, *God's Amazing Grace*, The Published Ellen G. White, Writings, 1995, 211.
 5. White, *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, 502.
 6. Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), 263.
 7. Ellen G. White, *Lift Him Up* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1988), 296.
 8. Ellen G. White, *Pastoral Ministry*, The Published Ellen G. White, Writings, CD-Rom. (1995), 269.
 9. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 551.
 10. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, 124.
 11. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903), 80.
 12. Ellen G. White, *Maranatha, the Lord is Coming* (Washington D.C: Review and Herald, 1976), 38.
 13. White, *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, 433.
 14. Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1956), 121.
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SESSION 5

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Good Relationships and Spirituality

- What is the difference between a **spiritual** person and a **religious** person? (Discuss in groups of three people).
 - To be a spiritual person means that the _____ is the total _____ and the One who is in _____.
 - Spirituality and sin have to be with _____.
 - Deuteronomy 6:4; 30:16.
 - _____ is an _____ never an _____ factor.
 - It is not only important what we do but also _____ we do it.
 - Having a real and personal love relationship with God will, among other things, result in the receiving of the _____ (Gal 5:22-23).
 - George K. Knight says, *“If people are not passing on the love of God to their neighbors, it is because they don’t have it. . . . Love is not only the one point on which the judgment turns; it is also the point by which Jesus identifies His disciples. To be a follower of Christ is to be a lover of God and fellow beings.”*¹
 - Spirituality is manifested in _____ relationships on a _____ basis.
-

- Dr. Francis Schaeffer stated: *“You will remember that we have previously seen that true spirituality has meaning in all the practical relationships of life: husband-wife, parent-child, employer-employee. These things must be taught in the church as an aspect of the conscious side of sanctification, to be understood and then acted upon by choice. The environment of the local church or other Christian group must be conducive for these things to grow. Such growth will never be once for all, but, like all things in our life, a moment-by-moment process.”*²
- Spirituality then is the _____ of God’s greatness and glory and the continual seeking of His _____. It is also the virtue of showing _____ and helping our neighbor in a _____ and altruist way.

*“Christians are to help each other on to increasingly substantial healing on the basis of the finished work of Christ. This is our calling. This is part of our richness in Christ: the reality of true spirituality.”*³

Connection between Good Relationships and Evangelism

- The Great _____ (Matthew 28:18-20).
- Ellen White says: *“The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places,” the final and full display of the love of God.”*⁴
- Evangelism shouldn’t be considered as an event but as a _____.

Christ’s method alone will bring true success in evangelism.
--

-
- Ellen White states: *“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”*⁵ Christ’s method consisted in:

- I Mingling with people.
- II Desiring their good.
- III Showing sympathy.
- IV Ministering to their needs.
- V Winning their confidence.
- VI Inviting.

“The gospel is not a product to be sold but a relationship to be shared.”⁶

- The Barna Research Group offered a statistical report showing that more than _____ times as many people accepted the message of the gospel from a personal witness of a _____ than from listening to the gospel in a church. In addition to this, the ratio increased to almost _____ times as many that accepted the gospel by way of a friend rather than by an evangelistic campaign at the church.⁷
 - People do not accept the Gospel because:
 - I They don’t see the _____ of the message.
 - II They don’t _____ what we are trying to explain.
 - III Different solutions.
 - IV Contradiction.
-

- Good relationships demonstrated among church members in loving and caring manifestations are still the most powerful _____ for reaching others for Christ.
- In local evangelism consider the Three-Rs Process
 - I Relate warmly in love to develop friendship.
 - II Recognize how people see their needs.
 - III Recommend personalized solutions.

“The most powerful attraction to a nonbeliever is seeing the life of someone transformed by the reality of the gospel. Although a verbal explanation of that faith is helpful toward facilitating a nonbeliever’s decision to follow Christ, a verbal proclamation without a lifestyle that supports that proclamation is powerless.”⁸

Next Meeting-Tomorrow April 11@ 11:00 AM
Good Relationship and the Postmodern Generation-Receiving others into the Church Ohana.

References

1. George R. Knight, *I Used to Be Perfect* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2001), 96-97.
2. Francis A. Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1988), 178.
3. Ibid., 180.
4. Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 9.
5. Ellen G. White, *Christian Service* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1941) 119.
6. Jard DeVille, *The Pastor’s Handbook on Interpersonal Relationships* (Silver Springs, MD: The Ministerial Association General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1995), 180.
7. Mark Mittelberg, *Building a Contagious Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 70.
8. George Barna, *Evangelism that Works* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1995), 27.



SESSION 6

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Good Relationships and the Postmodern Generation

- Five (5) generations in America
 - I Seniors (born in 1926 or earlier).
 - II The Builders (1927-1945).
 - III Baby Boomers (1946-1964).
 - IV Baby Busters (Generation X) (1965-1983).
 - V Mosaic (Generation Y) (1984-2004).
 - Postmodernism is the reaction & rejection of the values for :
 - I Moral _____: “What is true for you is true for you . . .”
 - II Autonomous _____: “Our choices are ours alone, determined by our personal pleasure, and not by any higher moral authority.”
 - III Narcissistic hedonism: “If it makes you happy, and it doesn’t hurt anyone else, then it’s ok.”
 - IV Reductive naturalism: “If it cannot be examined in a tangible, scientific manner, then it is not simply unknowable, it is meaningless.”¹
-

- Leonard Sweet summarizes postmodernism as a culture that is: _____, participatory, image-driven, and _____.²
- Religion is _____ and _____.
- Basic needs of the Postmodern (secular people)
 - I Release from _____.
 - II Genuine _____.
 - III Cosmic philosophy.
 - IV _____ direction.³

“Many of the people we are trying to reach, especially those from the younger generations, come from broken homes. They have felt the pain of living in fragmented family. They know what it feels like to be isolated and alone. They long for deeper community of some kind. They are attracted to whatever source seems to be able to give it, even in the absence of truth. I think this explains why many of the teachings are illogical and even outlandish, but they offer a sense of family and community that people desperately desire. Consequently, many people put their minds on pause for the sake of seeing their relational needs met.”⁴

- In a culture where loneliness has become one of the most painful experiences of life, the church needs to demonstrate _____, acceptance and _____ for those that are alone.
- Henry Nouwen said:

“A man can keep his sanity and stay alive as long as there is at least one person who is waiting for him. . . . A dying mother can stay alive to see her son before she gives up struggle, a soldier can prevent his mental and physical disintegration when he knows that his wife and children are waiting for him. But when ‘nothing and nobody’ is waiting, there is not chance to survive in the struggle for life.”⁵

- Post-moderns are not looking for _____ but rather for _____.
- One of the things that make Christianity obnoxious to the secular Postmodern is the lack of genuine _____ and sincerity among _____. Dr. Jon Paulien says:

“What does it mean to be genuine and authentic? Authenticity is when the inside is in harmony with the outside.”

“... but if there is one thing above all others that will draw secular people into a church, it is the sense that the people they meet there are living real lives with real struggles and real failures; that they are, in Christ, growing in grace and in love for one another as failing but forgiven human beings. Nothing gives me more courage in faith than to realize that my fellow brothers and sisters struggle with the same things I do and that I can face my problems together with others who care about me. The greatest need of Adventism ... is to make an end of living a lie.”⁶

Good Relationships and Receiving Others in the Church Ohana

- When an individual perceives that he/she is welcomed and accepted into the church family despite his/her religious background, lifestyle, or character it will serve as a fundamental factor in becoming a true _____ of Jesus.
- When each member accepts the reality that the church is a mission driven force that moves members forward, they will invest their energies in forming a true family and _____.
- People are not interested to hear _____ about love but want to _____ if, in reality, Christian love _____.
- The church needs to understand that as a loving community of faith they can be the _____ catalyst for those looking for forgiveness, peace and _____.

“The first stage in community healing is to heal myself. A community is ailing because its members are not whole.”⁷

A church that gives genuine and sincere love can be not only the perfect place to belong but also a healing community where meaning is found in pain.

NOTES

**Next Meeting-Wednesday April 15 @ 7:15 PM
Good Relationship Strength & Weaknesses-Skills.**

References

1. Gary Zustiak, *The Next Generation* (Joplin, MI: College Press Publishing Company, 1996), 132.
 2. Leonard Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 28.
 3. Jon Paulien, *Present Truth in the Real World* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1993), 127-135.
 4. Mark Mittelberg, *Building a Contagious Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 46.
 5. Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1972), 66.
 6. Paulien, *Present Truth in the Real World*, 192, 201.
 7. Walter J. Burghardt, *Dare to Be Christ*, (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1991), 63.
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SESSION 7

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Waipahu SDA Church-Strengths and Weaknesses

☐ Strengths

- I The membership is composed by more _____ than _____.
- II A very high percentage of the members are _____ and above.
- III Majority of the surveyed understands that love is very important to the effectiveness of the church in terms of growth.
- IV The church is willing to attend and learn from a seminar on interpersonal relationships.

☐ Weaknesses

- I Lack of _____.
 - II Church members seldom _____ people to church _____ or _____.
 - III Lack of connection between first time _____ and members.
 - IV Church members are very _____ with the level of relationships.
 - V A significant number of the surveyed have some problems in _____, the way they relate to others, confrontation and _____.¹
-

Interacting with others

I Remember all the theory that we have studied so far.

“Our success, fulfillment, and happiness depend upon our ability to relate effectively.”²

II The first person you must get along with is _____.

“Your image of yourself restricts your ability to build healthy relationships.”³

III Remember that it is your duty to live for others (Romans 14:7).

“The happiest people are those who have invested their time in others.”⁴

IV _____ everyday asking for the _____ of the _____.

V Consider the five different needs of every person: _____,
_____, emotional, social, and _____.

VI Believe the _____ in others and _____ them.

VII Show genuine _____ for others.

VIII Always give a _____ (Philippians 4: 11-13; 4:4).

IX Try to memorize the _____ (Isaiah 49:16).

X Make others feel _____.

XI Show _____.

XII Consider others _____ than you (Philippians 2:3).

“I have never met a man who was not my superior in some particular.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

*Interacting-coping with difficult people*⁵

I Critical and complaining (The _____).

“No matter how hard you work, how great your ideas, or how wonderful your talent, you probably will be the object of criticism.”⁶

- a. Face the critic _____.
- b. Remember that _____ was criticized.
- c. Put yourself in the critic’s _____.
- d. Do not close your _____.
- e. Keep your _____ alive.

II Self Pity and play the victim (The _____).

- a. Face the martyr _____.
- b. Do not expect too much change.
- c. Get martyrs _____.
- d. Find the _____ if you can.
- e. Avoid the _____ trap.

III Automatically negative and pessimistic (The Wet _____).

- a. Face the martyr _____.
- b. Guard against infection.
- c. Keep _____ forward.
- d. Try to _____ and make them _____ (Proverbs 17:22).
- e. Do not expect a _____.

IV Blindly insensitive to others (The Steamroller)

- a. Face the steamroller within.
 - b. Acknowledge the difficulty.
 - c. Find the _____ in them.
 - d. Avoid a _____ struggle.
 - e. _____ when you can.
 - f. Set your _____.
-

- V Spread rumors and leak secrets (The _____).
- a. Recognize the _____ within.
 - b. Clarify the situation.
 - c. Cut off gossips.
 - d. Leave no opportunity for _____.
 - e. Know whom you tell your _____.
- According to Parrott others problematic people are the control freaks, the backstabbers, the cold shoulders, the green-eyed monsters, the volcanoes, the sponges, the competitor, the workhorse, the flirts, the chameleons.
 - Remember always to _____. (Proverbs 17:22). ***“If you can find humor in anything, you can survive it”*** Bill Cosby.
 - Never discuss with _____ people. (Proverbs 14:7). ***“Never contend with one that is foolish, proud, positive, testy or with a superior or a clown, in matters of argument”*** Thomas Fuller.
 - Do not pay attention what others _____ or say about you. (Isaiah 43:4). ***“Of every ten persons who talk about you, nine will say something bad, and the tenth will say something good in a bad way”*** Antoine Rivarol.

Next Meeting-Friday April 17@ 7:15 PM

References

1. Results are based on the surveys applied on Sabbath March 28, 2009.
 2. John C. Maxwell, *Be a People Person* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Books, 1994), 9.
 3. Ibid., 20.
 4. Ibid., 15.
 5. Les Parrott, *High Maintenance Relationships* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996).
 6. Ibid., 11.
 7. Ibid., 77-200.
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SESSION 8

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Communication skills

“The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing in the right place, but to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment” Lady Dorothy Nevill.¹

- ☐ An effective communicator _____ more and talks _____.
- ☐ Ask questions that the other person will _____ answering.
- ☐ Encourage others to talk about themselves and their _____.

“The royal road to a man’s heart is to talk to him about the things he treasures most.”²

- ☐ Do not talk continuously about _____. Do not be intoxicated with your own _____ (Proverbs 27:2).

“The man who talks only of himself, thinks only of himself and the man who thinks only of himself is hopelessly uneducated. He is not educated no matter how instructed he may be” (Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, Former President of Columbia University).

- ☐ One of the biggest problems in communication is that we do not know how to _____ effectively.
 - ☐ _____ is more than hearing: 75% of oral communication is _____, misunderstood or quickly _____.³
-

*Listening Skills*⁴

I *Attending skills*: Giving your _____ attention to others.

a. A posture of involvement

1. Inclining one's _____ toward the speaker.
2. _____ the speaker directly.
3. Open position with arms and legs _____.
4. Positioning at an appropriate _____.

b. Appropriate _____

1. Be _____.
2. Avoid _____ motions and gestures.

c. _____ contact

1. Effective eye contact expresses interest.
2. Lack of eye contact can be a sign of _____.

d. Non _____ environment

1. Remove sizable physical barriers.
2. The speaker wants the listener to be with him/her.

“One friend, one person who is truly understanding, who takes the trouble to listen to us as we consider our problems, can change our whole outlook on the world.”

Dr. Elton Mayo

II Following skills: Do not _____ the conversation. Getting more information.

a. Door opener

1. No coercive invitation to talk.
2. *"I'm interested to hear more about it."*
3. Be careful of using _____ statements.
4. Describe the other person's body language.
5. _____ to talk or to continue talking.

b. Minimal encourages

1. Simple responses: "Tell me more," "I see," and "Right."
2. _____ expression is better than words.

c. Infrequent questions

1. Knowing how to _____ questions effectively.

d. Attentive silence

1. Leave the speaker _____, feel, and _____ himself.
2. Don't talk (Ecclesiastes 3:7).

III Reflecting skills: The listener has the ability to respond reflectively.

- a. Paraphrasing:** Short response to the speaker which states the essence of the other's content in the listener's own words.
-

b. Reflecting feelings

1. Listen to the _____ and _____ and mention them.

c. Reflecting meanings

1. You reflect in the _____ why that is happening.

d. Summative reflection

1. Brief restatement of the main _____ and _____ the speaker expressed over a long period of conversation.

When speaking remember the followings

“A man finds joy in giving an apt reply, and how good is a timely word!” (Proverbs 15:23). ***“A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver”*** (Proverbs 25:11).

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17). ***“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone”*** (Colossians 4:6).

“... set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).⁵

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 3. Robert Bolton, *People Skills* (New York, NY: Simon and Shuster, 1979), 30.
 4. Ibid.
 5. All verses have been taken from the New International Version.
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SESSION 9

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Criticism

I Know that no matter what you _____ you will be criticized.

“No matter how hard you work, how great your ideas, or how wonderful your talent, you probably will be the object of criticism.”¹

II Do not pay attention what others _____ or say about you. Establish your worth according to God’s value system (Isaiah 43:4). ***“Of every ten persons who talk about you, nine will say something bad, and the tenth will say something good in a bad way”*** Antoine Rivarol.

III _____ and take care of yourself.

“You will be able to love and help others better and longer if you take care of yourself first. Exercise regularly, eat right, and get enough sleep. Take time to renew your spirit. Find new ways to grow, new ways to understand the world. And don’t become overburdened by accepting every cause or task that comes your way. Pick and choose; stay in balance. If you allow yourself to burn out, you will no longer have the energy to love and help others”²

IV Focus on _____ not on your situation.

V Begin to develop knowledge of _____.

Handling with Criticism

- I Understand the difference between _____ and _____ criticism.
- II Don't take yourself too _____.
- III Look beyond the criticism and see the _____.
- IV Watch your own _____ toward the critic.
- V Realize that _____ people get criticized.
- VI Keep physically and _____ in shape.
- VII Surround yourself with _____ people.

Giving Criticism

- I Check your _____.
 - II Make sure the issue is _____ of criticism.
 - III Be specific.
 - IV Don't undermine the person's self-confidence.
 - V Never _____ one person with another.
 - VI Be _____ or do not confront.
 - VII Attack the problem not the _____
 - VIII Confront when the _____ is right.
 - IX Look at yourself before looking at others.
 - X End confrontation with _____.³
-

Considering the following when you interact with others

I Try to _____ an argument.

“If you argue and rankle and contradict, you may achieve a victory sometimes; but it will be an empty victory because you will never get your opponent’s good will”
(Benjamin Franklin).

II Show respect for the other person’s _____.

III If you are wrong recognize it with emphasis.

IV Begin with a _____ way.

V Begin with something you _____.

VI Let the other person do a great deal of the _____.

VII Let the other person feel that the _____ is his/her.

VIII Try to see things from the other person’s point of view.

IX Be sympathetic with the other person’s ideas and desires.

X Call attention to people mistakes _____.

XI Talk about your own _____ before criticizing the other person.

XII Let the other person save his/her face.

XIII Praise every _____.

XIV Give the person a good _____ to live up.

XV To correct a fault use _____.⁴

*The 10 Paradoxical Commandments*⁵

1. *People are illogical, _____, and self-centered. _____ them anyway.*
2. *If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish secret motives. Do good anyway.*
3. *If you are _____, you will win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.*
4. *The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.*
5. _____ *and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway.*
6. *The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds. Think big anyway.*
7. *People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs. Fight for a few underdogs anyway.*
8. *What you spend years _____ may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.*
9. *People really need _____ but may attack you if you do help them. Help anyway.*
10. *Give the world the _____ you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you have anyway.*

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1. Les Parrott, *High-Maintenance Relationships* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 11.
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 3. John C. Maxwell, *Be a People Person* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Books, 1994), 120-128.
 4. Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, (New York, NY: Simon and Shuster, 1936), 172-200.
 5. Keith, *Anyway*.
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SESSION 10

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Conflict in the Bible

- ☐ It began in _____. The Great _____.
 - ☐ Conflict is the result of the _____.
 - ☐ Few biblical examples on conflict
 1. The herdsmen of Abraham and Lot (Genesis 13:5-12).
 2. Family dispute in Abraham's household (Genesis 16).
 3. Solomon and the mothers (1 Kings 3:16-28).
 4. Complain of the Greeks against the Hebrews (Acts 6).
 5. Public confrontation between Paul and Peter (Gal 2:11-14).
 6. Jerusalem conference (Acts 15:1-31).
 7. Disagreement between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41).
 8. Corinthian leadership struggle (1 Corinthians 1:11,12).
 - 1. What can we learn from it?
 1. Conflict is in the Bible.
 2. Conflict is _____. To be human is to experience _____.
 3. A desire to reconciliation and fix the situation can lead to conflict management and eventually to _____.
 4. Direct _____ weather public and private is necessary and it may include correcting and even separation.
-

Some sources of conflict

1. Conflicting _____ and _____.
2. Differing _____.
3. Aggressive _____.
4. Behavior that hurts.
5. _____ clashes.

The benefits of conflict

1. Social scientists have discovered that _____ only endures when dissension is faced openly.

“We cannot find personal intimacy without conflict...Love and conflict are inseparable.”¹

2. It can prevent stagnation.
3. It can stimulate interest and _____ and foster creativity.

□ Three (3) possible alternatives when facing conflict

1. _____.
 2. _____.
 3. _____.
-

Confrontation

1. _____ must come before the confrontation.
2. Sense of support must be present before the criticism.
3. Experience of _____.
4. Trust.
5. Affirmation.
6. Love.²

Conflict Resolution Method

1. Step 1: Ask yourself the following questions:
 - a. Who should be there?
 - b. When is the best time to do it?
 - c. Where is the best place?
2. Step 2: Treat the other person with _____.
3. Step 3: _____ until you experience “the other side.”
4. Step 4: State your views, needs, and _____.
5. Step 5: Find a mature and Christian solution.

Think Win-Win

- ☐ Five paradigms of human interactions
- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1. Win-Lose. | 4. Win. |
| 2. Lose-Win. | 5. Win-Win. |
| 3. Lose-Lose. | |
-

“Win-Win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. Win-Win means that agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial, mutually satisfying. With a Win-Win solution, all parties feel good about the decision and feel committed to the action plan. Win-Win sees life as a cooperative, not a competitive arena.”³

Evaluation the Conflict

1. What have I _____ from this fight?
2. How well did I use the conflict resolution process?
3. How badly was I hurt?
4. How badly was my partner hurt?
5. How useful was it in revealing new information about myself, my partner, and the issue of contention?
6. Are we closer or farther apart as a result of this fight?
7. What do I want to do different the next time I face a conflict?
8. What do I wish my partner would do differently the next time he and I fight?

Next Meeting – Saturday May 16 @ 11:00 AM

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1. Gibson Winter, *Love and Conflict: New Patterns in Family Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958, 102; cited in R. Bolton, *People Skills* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Source, 1979) 207.
 2. David Augsburger, *Caring Enough to Confront* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1981), 52.
 3. Stephen Cove, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 206.
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SESSION 11

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Forgiveness

Things we need to remember

- ☐ Whenever two or more persons are involved in a relationship there is going to be _____, misinterpretation, and _____.
- ☐ Conflict is _____.
- ☐ The image of God is expressed in _____, community and _____ with each other before God.
- ☐ Kevin Harney says: *“There is also no better place to learn the art of forgiveness than in the life of the church. The church is filled with people. People are broken and sinful. Spend enough time in the church and you will be hurt. And when you are nursing the wounds and still feeling the sharp pain inflicted by a brother or sister, you will hear Jesus’ voice calling you to forgive.”*¹

Forgiveness begins with us

1. Be _____.

*“You cannot blame others for who you are; your life is your own responsibility. You must choose not to give another person the right to define who you are. While you are not responsible for the hurtful actions of someone else, you are responsible for what you do after someone has wronged you. Your life is your responsibility.”*²

*“Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a permanent attitude.”*³

2. Stop _____ others and take responsibility for your life.

“We are taught you must blame your father, your sisters, your brother, the school, the teacher but never blame yourself. It’s never your fault. But it’s always your fault because if you wanted to change, you’re the one who has got to change.”

Katharine Hepburn

3. Have a high _____ of yourself.

- Matthew 22:39; 1 Peter 1:18 19; Isaiah 43:4.

“To perceive you as equally precious again requires that I see myself as precious, worthy, irreducibly valuable as a person; or my equal regard may be expressed in my despising you as equally worthless.”⁴

- _____ people cannot forgive.

“Anyone can get angry that is easy but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way, that is not for everyone, nor is it easy.”

Aristotle

“The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.”

Mahatma Gandhi

4. Be _____.

“Mistakes are a part of being human. Appreciate your mistakes for what they are: precious life lessons that can only be learned the hard way. Unless it’s fatal mistake, which, at least, others can learn from.”⁵

5. Remember that life is too _____. (Ecclesiastes 9:7-10).

“Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.”⁶

Eight general principles on forgiveness

1. Accept that life is not _____ and that others may play by a different set of rules than you do.

“... forgiveness is difficult because we all want to believe that life is fair.”⁷

2. Stop blaming others for your circumstances.
3. Understand that you cannot change the person who hurt you; you can only change yourself.
4. Acknowledge the anger and hurt that some unpleasant or even harmful event is causing you.
5. Recognize that only you can make the choice to forgive.

“Vengeance hurts me more than it hurts the other person. . . . Forgiveness helps me more than it does the other person.”⁸

6. Shift your view of the offender by humbly choosing to empathize with his or her life situation.
7. Intentionally move from discontent toward contentment.
8. Understand that forgiveness will take time and cannot be rushed

Twelve biblical principles on forgiveness

- **Principle 1** I will be forgiven as I _____ (Matthew 6:12-15).
 - **Principle 2** If I don't forgive, my worship is _____ to God (Matthew 5:23-24; Proverbs 21:3).
 - **Principle 3** Forgiveness is for _____, not just for those who 'deserve' it (Matthew 9:2).
-

- **Principle 4** It is easier to forgive when there has been a confession (Psalm 32:1).
- **Principle 5** Forgiveness will bring repentance (Luke 19: 8).
- **Principle 6** The freedom of knowing the _____ (John 8:32).
- **Principle 7** “Seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:22).
- **Principle 8** There is not such a thing as “Christian” vengeance (Romans 12:19)
- **Principle 9** Healing always comes with _____ (Psalm 103:3).
- **Principle 10** Forgiveness requires that you accept _____.
- **Principle 11** Forgive _____
- **Principle 12** Forgive _____. (Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 55:8, 9)

Next Meeting – Saturday May 30 @ 11:00 AM

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1. Kevin Harney, *Leadership from the Inside Out* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 34.
 2. Dick Tibbits, *Forgive to Live* (Franklin, TN: Integrity Publishers, 2006), 33.
 3. Martin Luther King Jr., quoted in Tibbits, *Forgive to Live*, 164.
 4. David, Augsburg, *Caring Enough to Forgive* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1981), 37.
 5. Tibbits, *Forgive to Live*, 155.
 6. Ibid., 22.
 7. Ibid., 22.
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SESSION 12

BETTER PERSON-BETTER CHRISTIAN

Interpersonal Relationship Seminar

Reasons why we need to forgive¹

1. We have been _____ (Romans 5:8).
2. In Christ we are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
3. As a renewed person, I am assigned the ministry of _____ (2 Corinthians 5:18).
4. We are called to intercede for our neighbor (1 Peter 2:9).
5. The body of Christ, His church, is held to a higher standard (Colossians 3:12-14).
6. Forgiveness is an outgrowth of love, and love fulfills the law (Matthew 22:37-40).
7. The final judgment has everything to do with forgiveness (Revelation 19:11-16).

“Forgiveness . . . sets all the highest values of love in motion. In a sense, forgiveness is Christianity at its highest level.”

John MacArthur

What forgiveness is not

1. Passing over or _____ the offense.
 2. Denying the reality of the offense.
-

3. Diminishing the importance of what happened.
4. Excusing the offender.
5. Holding the offender hostage.²
6. Tolerance.³
7. _____ people.
8. _____.
9. Giving back _____.

What forgiveness is

1. Recognize that we are fallen humans.

“To err is human, to forgive, divine.”

Alexander Pope

“There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.”

Martin Luther King Jr.

2. A _____.

“When you forgive the person who hurt you deeply and unfairly, you perform a miracle that has no equal. Nothing else is the same.”⁴

3. Letting go the _____. Living and enjoying the _____.
Welcoming the _____.

“Letting go is accepting one’s humanity and recognizing one’s powerlessness to force another or coerce satisfaction from the other, or to seduce the universe into functioning according to one’s pretentious demands. Letting go is relaxing one’s grip on pain. Most human pain is caused by holding on or holding back. Holding on to the past is like attaching one’s nerve endings to an object outside oneself which is stuck, stationary.”⁵

“The first and often the only person to be healed by forgiveness is the person who does the forgiveness...When we genuinely forgive, we set a prisoner free and then discover that the prisoner we set free was us.”⁶

“Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future.” Dutch Physician
Paul Boese

4. A process of restoring relationships.

“Forgiveness is giving up my right to hurt your for hurting me. . . Forgiveness is the process of reframing one’s anger and hurt from the past, with the goal of recovering one’s peace in the present and revitalizing one’s purpose and hopes for the future.”⁷

- Henri Nouwen said that forgiveness was *“love practiced among people who love poorly.”*

5. Offering _____.

“Many years ago I was driven to the conclusion that the two major causes of most emotional problems among evangelical Christians are these: the failure to understand, receive and live out God’s unconditional grace and forgiveness; and the failure to give out that unconditional love, forgiveness, and grace to other people...We read, we hear, we believe a good theology of grace. But that’s not the way we live. The good news of the Gospel of grace has not penetrated the level of our emotions.”⁸

“The world can do almost anything as well as or better than the church. You need not be a Christian to build houses, feed the hungry, or heal the sick. There is only one thing the world cannot do. It cannot offer grace” (Gordon MacDonald).

“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.”

C. S. Lewis

“Christianity has a principle, ‘Hate the sin but love the sinner,’ which is more easily preached than practiced. If Christians could simply recover that practice, modeled so exquisitely by Jesus, we would go a long way toward fulfilling our calling as dispensers of God’s grace.”⁹

Three biblical examples

1. Hosea and Gomer.
2. Jesus.

“Without the cross, there would be no moral basis for forgiveness.” Chuck Lynch

3. Saul and Stephen.

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1. Lourdes E. Morales-Gudmundsson, *I Forgive you but . . .* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007), 59-64.
 2. Ibid., 43-47.
 3. Lewis B. Smedes, *Forgive and Forget* (New York, NY: Pocket Books, 1984), 59-69.
 4. Ibid., 59.
 5. David, Augsburg, *Caring Enough to Forgive* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1981), 56.
 6. Smedes, *Forgive and Forget*, 100.
 7. Dick Tibbits, *Forgive to Live*, (Franklin, TN: Integrity Publishers, 2006), 5.
 8. David Seamands quoted in, Philip Yancey, *What’s so Amazing About Grace?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 15.
 9. Ibid., 280.
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EDUCATION

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Venezuelan Adventist University (IUNAV), B.A. in Theology, 1998.

ORDINATION

Ordained to the Gospel Ministry on April 26, 2006.

EXPERIENCE

Pastor, Wahiawa SDA Church (2010 -).

ShareHim-Global Evangelism, Coordinator, Hawai'i Conference (2007-present).

Pastor, Waipahu SDA Church (2005 - 2010).

Pastor, Oahu Hispanic SDA Church (200 -).

Student Missionary, Central America (1997).

Evangelism: giving seminars, being speaker or coordinating weeks of prayer, evangelistic crusades, revivals and motivational sermons in Venezuela, Central America, Puerto Rico, United States of America, Mexico, Ethiopia, Mongolia, Canada, Japan, Romania, Taiwan, India, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and South Africa.

